MISTRESS OF THE SKIES

Now that so many of the marvels foretold in the fantasies of romances of Jules Verne and others have become commonplaces of every day, it becomes increasingly difficult for writers to enable the sophisticated modern reader to recapture anything of the thrill his fathers knew when they plunged into the fictional world of fantastic mechanical development. Yet it is upon just such an idea that the versatile Joseph Delmont has built this exciting romance.

A beautiful young Austrian girl finds that she is debarred by her sex from following the course of scientific training upon which she has set her heart, but overcomes the difficulties by passing herself off as a youth and taking a full part in the life of a technical training college for men. Her brilliant gifts lead her to discover the means of propelling, first small packages and messages, and finally herself, over the wireless waves of the world, and she fathoms the inmost secrets of electricity.

All who know the descriptive power, vigorous imagination and robust humour displayed by Joseph Delmont in his previous books, will readily anticipate the grip in which he holds his reader as the secrets are revealed, and depicts the tremendous effects of the invention upon the nations. The thrills are judiciously relieved by a pleasant romance and a generous display of humour.

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MISTRESS OF THE SKIES

CHAPTER ONE

"THE statutes of our establishment make it impossible for us to accede to your request. Clause 26 specifically precludes the admission of female students.

"*Das Rektorat*,
"*Technikum Hohenwelten*,
"(*Signed*) Professor Gerstenkorn."

Loisi Hacker angrily crumpled the sheet of paper and hurled it into a corner of the room.

"And they call this a world of progress!" she spat out in exasperation. "A woman can't train as a bridge-builder or constructional engineer just because the technical colleges choose to shut their doors on us."

The infuriated girl flung herself into an armchair, crossed her legs, and dropped her head on to her hand.

Herr Pfleiderer got up, retrieved the paper from the floor, smoothed it out, and read, now and again glancing over the edge to enjoy the spectacle of the girl's shapely, silk-clad legs which were visible well above the knee.

"I don't understand you, Loiserl. What precisely is it that makes you want to be an engineer? Is it a suitable career for a girl? Is it necessary? I can only repeat what I've said before, that if you . . ."

Loisi jerked her head round and, becoming aware of Pfleiderer's glances, made a vain attempt to pull her short frock down over her knees. She turned on him fuming:

people's property had been left to Loisi. She continued to live in her grandparents' house, where the servants remained faithful to her; and every attempt by Pfleiderer to persuade his ward to go and live with him met with vigorous opposition.

"A pretty state of things!" cried old Crescentia, who had been the Hackers' housekeeper for over forty years. "Catch us letting the child go and live with a bachelor! What would people be saying after a bit, I should like to know!"

Pfleiderer, the owner of many houses, was regarded by all the inhabitants of Graz as a Don Juan, but the truth was far from being as bad as people made out. His sole crime consisted in a reluctance to marry. He was a true *bourgeois*, who merely held rather less straitlaced views than his fellow citizens, but never put them into practice. He had philandered with a few café waitresses but had skilfully eluded the meshes of matrimony. This was taken in ill part by the Grazers in general, and particularly by those who lived in the Third District.

When Loisi was fourteen, she had looked sixteen. She could not exactly be called beautiful, but she exercised an unconscious attraction upon the male sex. Lords of creation were constantly running after this tall girl, and whispering words of love in her ear; but all the response they obtained from the object of their desires took the form of stinging weals inflicted with the strap which held her books together. Any man who had once been repulsed by Loisi in this manner fought shy of her in future.

One lovely autumn day Karl Pfleiderer returned from his summer vacation in St. Lawrence and beheld with dumb amazement the beauty of his ward, as in enthusiastic tones she spoke of her future. He was even more amazed when Loisi informed him that she intended to enter a technical

school, and later a technical college, with a view to becoming an engineer. All efforts to dissuade her fell upon deaf ears.

Pfleiderer often visited his ward, and one day the old bachelor realized that he was desperately in love with Loisi, in love in a way that was quite outside anything in his experience.

For months he struggled with this passion, cursed himself for a fool giving way to vain dreams and unrealizable desires. He took stock of himself, critically examined his reflection in the mirror, and finally decided to speak.

Loisi was convulsed with laughter when her guardian came forward with a full-dress declaration of his feelings, followed by an offer of marriage. The betrothal was to take place on Loisi's seventeenth birthday.

The middle-aged Pfleiderer did not abandon his importunate wooing, until Loisi threatened to appeal to the Guardian Authority. Even then, though in a shamefaced, pleading way, the lovesick man repeatedly renewed his suit.

Loisi came to a standstill before the little mirror of her dressing-table and examined her face with interest. She stared long at her reflection, thinking hard. Suddenly an idea flashed into her brain. She turned round and ran back into the living-room. Yes, her guardian was still there.

"You keep saying you're fond of me, Guardian. If that's really and truly the case, you must do me a little favour."

"Anything at all, Loisi; anything you like; as soon as you promise me just one thing."

"Nothing doing; I'll promise nothing. Love must be disinterested."

"Go on, child. What is it you want ? But don't forget that I'm fond of you."

"All right, that can wait. Are you going to do what I ask ?"

"Yes, but what is it ? If it's within my power."

"Oh, you can do it all right." Loisi reflected. "You're my guardian and godfather, aren't you ?"

"Yes, yes, but what has that got to do with it ?"

"Have a little patience," she replied. "Who makes out the domicile- and birth-certificate forms at the registrar's ?"

Pfleiderer looked at the girl blankly. Loisi repeated her question.

"Oh, I don't know ; probably there's an official for each district who keeps the registers."

Loisi sat down on the arm of Pfleiderer's chair.

"You say you like me, want to marry me. Well, get me a registration form of birth, domicile, and baptism in the name of Alois Hacker, and then in two years' time we'll talk about marriage."

Pfleiderer gazed at Loisi open-mouthed. He thought she had taken leave of her senses. When he saw her serious expression he was convinced that she meant what she said and that this was not a joke. He felt her lower arm against his neck. Her proximity made his senses reel. He jerked himself to his feet.

"Now, now, my dear child, you can't take me for such an ass as that. I can't let myself be led into committing a crime."

He reflected a moment. "Supposing after the two years you take a dislike to me, or fall in love with somebody else meanwhile ?"

The girl stood up before him and looked straight into his face. Pfleiderer had to lower his eyes.

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself, Guardian ? Just

think what a marriage between us two would be like. Of course, I'm old for my age, as everybody says, look older than I really am; but after all *you* won't get any younger while you're waiting for me."

Without a word of farewell Pfleiderer left the room. Loisi looked after him, then laughed aloud and withdrew to her workshop.

It was her dream to surpass Edison, Marconi, Tesla, and all the other great inventors. She was continually experimenting, and was at present engaged on an invention which was to be fitted into the heels of men's shoes. From a small terminal at the back of the shoe thin flexes connected with a battery in the hip pocket which, charged with an electric current by the wearer's strides, worked a tiny pocket lamp and lighter. A second invention was contrived to remind people on their way to work, or on walks, of everything they had intended to do or buy. In the inside pocket of the jacket was to be carried a miniature dictaphone the shape and size of a letter-case, into which could be spoken in the morning everything it was wished to remember during the day. At each sentence the apparatus could be set exactly to the time at which the purchase was to be made, or the conversation or appointment was due.

Loisi thought this invention marvellous. Ladies could carry the device in their vanity-bags or dress pockets. It would be splendid in the tram or café, or on a shopping expedition, to hear one's own voice coming out of one's bag or pocket, with:

"Don't forget the coffee," or "Give my love to Aunt Amalie," or "You've got to meet Pepi in the Krebsenkeller."

Loisi was convinced that it would be a huge success.

Twelve o'clock striking roused her from her dreams. More than thirty clocks proclaimed the hour.

CHAPTER TWO

COUNCILLOR PFLEIDERER, the confirmed bachelor, felt deeply hurt. That silly minx could whistle a long time before she got *him* for a husband. He old! Why, he felt twenty, ready to take on any youth of that age. He would live a long, long time yet; the Pfleiderers often passed the age of eighty, or even ninety. That little goose Loisi might think herself lucky to get him! In Graz, mothers with marriageable daughters of the best families had been angling for him for years past. The most beautiful, the richest girls would surrender at once to his wooing.

When Herr Pfleiderer, his face expressing his ill-temper, entered the room, slammed the door behind him, and impatiently threw his hat on to the leather sofa so that the tuft of chamois hair which adorned it bristled in protest at the unceremonious treatment, he found Frau Wurz in a state of great agitation.

"Oh dear, oh dear; if only I knew where they'd got to! I'm sure someone has put them out of the way!" she wailed, drying her tears on the corner of her apron and smoothing back the hair from her brow.

Pfleiderer turned a look of annoyance upon his landlady and muttered between his teeth:

"What are you whining about this time? Who do you mean?"

"You won't care; but you were glad enough to play with them; Herr Bindernagel and Fräulein Mittermaier were quite good enough for that."

"When will you stop calling the two little beasts *Herr* and *Fräulein* ?"

"Father in Heaven ! How can anyone be so heartless—little beasts, indeed !"

"Well, what's the matter ? For heaven's sake stop snivelling ! The dog has been away often enough, and the cat too, and every time you've thought someone had killed them or stolen them ; but they've always turned up again. They'll find their way back all right."

"I can't believe it. Herr Bindernagel always comes back on the stroke of twelve for his dinner, even when he has wandered a long way off. And now it's half-past one. He has been led astray again by Fräulein Mittermaier."

"Oh, be quiet !" cried Pfleiderer, and with these words he threw himself heavily on to the sofa, only to leap into the air with a torrent of oaths and pull out of the back of his thigh the pin which fastened the plume to his hat.

"Why can't you hang this hat up, Frau Wurz ? Do you want me to get blood-poisoning ?"

The landlady smoothed the Styrian hat, but, instead of making any movement towards hanging it up, she held it out to her master.

"Who will you have to play with and talk to if Herr Bindernagel and Fräulein Mittermaier are lost ?" she cried in a tear-strangled voice. "Your father and mother won't like that ; they wouldn't have let the poor things be killed by the slaughterer. Ooh, lord help me ; and I who carried you about in my arms when you were a tiny tot !"

"You might just as well have dropped me while you were about it, you old witch ! So I've got to go hunting these wretched little beasts instead of having my dinner ! If only I can lay hands on Herr Bindernagel, I'll show him !"

Frau Wurz laughed through her tears.

"Oh, you won't do anything to him. You'll be only too glad to find them both again."

Exasperated, Pfleiderer burst out of the house on to the Lindweg. Which way should he turn? The two animals usually went off in the direction of the neighbouring Rosenberg, where they would play about for a few hours until Herr Bindernagel, a black terrier not twenty centimetres high, felt his stomach protesting that it was midday. Then, without paying any further heed to the pranks of Fräulein Mittermaier, the grey castrated tom-cat, would trot off home, leaving the cat no alternative but to follow its friend.

The two animals were great favourites in the Third District, where everyone knew them. No one ever did them any harm, even the most hardened young ruffians refraining from pelting them with stones or tormenting them. Herr Bindernagel, moreover, would have resented such conduct vigorously. Small though he was, weighing only a couple of kilos, he would set his teeth into anyone who attempted to seize or strike him, and nip hard. Though his sharp little teeth did not inflict serious wounds, they could be very painful. People started back frightened when the little fellow jumped up at them, and the children left him in peace.

Fräulein Mittermaier willingly allowed himself to be stroked even by strangers, purring contentedly, and would have allowed himself to be picked up but for Herr Bindernagel. The dwarf terrier looked down in contempt at this cat which accepted the caresses of the first-comer; his eyes would glare, showing the whites, and then his teeth would bury themselves deep into the hand of the indiscreet person who tried to pick the cat up.

There had been trouble about the names Bindernagel and Mittermaier, the matter having even come before the

local magistrates. Frau Wurz had bestowed these names upon her pets out of pure vindictiveness. In Herr Pfleiderer's house lived a comedian from the municipal theatre, who maintained a state of constant warfare with Frau Wurz. He was a choleric gentleman, whom Frau Wurz infuriated by joining in when he was rehearsing his lines at the open window. The old landlady had even caused some disturbance in the gallery of the theatre by saying each sentence aloud during Herr Bindernagel's turn, so putting the fat comedian badly off his stroke. Twice she had been turned out of the theatre during the performance.

Although the tiny terrier "Pitty" bore no sort of resemblance to the huge, corpulent Herr Bindernagel, Frau Wurz changed his name to that of the comedian. When the dog was playing with the cat in the garden behind the courtyard, the landlady would keep sticking her head out of Herr Pfleiderer's kitchen window and screaming:

"Herr Bindernagel!"

Unfailingly, the grey, tousled head of the comedian would be shot out of the window of his room. He was caught every time.

The little dog soon grew accustomed to the new name, and then would answer to no other.

Herr Bindernagel appealed to the Courts, and brought an action against Frau Wurz for insulting behaviour. When the case was heard, the magistrate called the lady's attention to the insult she had perpetrated, and ordered her, under threat of punishment, to refrain in future from calling the dog Herr Bindernagel.

"But why shouldn't I; why not? Our butcher calls his dog Tyras, and he's a Roman Emperor."

"I don't understand," said the magistrate, staring at

her in bewilderment. "Your butcher was emperor of Rome?"

"No, no. The emperor who once lived in Rome and had the Christians burnt was called Tyras."

"You mean the Emperor Nero."

"Yes, that's right; I was mixing him up for a minute with the butcher's dog."

It made no difference. Frau Wurz did not change her dog's name, and Herr Bindernagel, the comedian, changed his room for one overlooking the street, where he would not be made a fool of and could enjoy peace.

The case was similar with Fräulein Mittermaier, the castrated tomcat.

On the second floor of the house lived Marta Mittermaier, a shorthand-typist. She could not have been called plain exactly, but the symmetry of her face was marred by a somewhat oversized nose. Fräulein Mittermaier was long and lean and carried her artificially blonde, close-cropped head a little too high, so that her nose thrust more aggressively than ever into the world. She undertook all kinds of typing work and kept a constant look-out for a well-to-do suitor. She regularly answered all the marriage advertisements that appeared in the Graz papers, unhappily without success. Herr Pfleiderer had several times had Fräulein Mittermaier in his flat to take down from his dictation, and since then "that hop-pole"—as Frau Wurz disrespectfully called her—constantly hunted the owner of the house, and often knocked at his door on the first story.

This importunity became too much for Frau Wurz. She considered means of revenge, and decided to use the same methods as in her difference of opinion with the comedian.

She christened the cat Fräulien Mittermaier, and several

times a day the name would be cried shrilly from the courtyard window.

Here again protests were of little avail. Frau Wurz would pay the small fine imposed and continue to call the cat Fräulein Mittermaier.

"Why should you call the animal Fräulein Mittermaier? Surely the name is out of place, since, according to the plaintiff, it is a male."

Frau Wurz stooped down, picked up from the floor a smallish covered basket, placed it, before anyone could stop her, on the magistrate's table, and opened the lid. The head of a small terrier and the solemn face of a tom-cat peered out.

"Have a look, sir. You see it's not a tomcat any longer; it can't be because I had it castrated when it was quite small. And that one is Herr Bindernagel. He gets more like his namesake every day. He even lolls his tongue a little out of his mouth."

Complaints to Herr Pfleiderer and the Courts were useless. Frau Wurz did not give up the new names she had given to her pets, and even Herr Pfleiderer, who at first had vigorously discountenanced such conduct, though without success, gradually got accustomed to calling the dog Herr Bindernagel and the cat Fräulein Mittermaier. He was very fond of the two quaint little animals, and often played with them.

Pfleiderer stood at the end of the Lindweg, where the rise to the Rosenberg begins. He whistled and called again and again appealingly: "Herr Bindernagel! Herr Bindernagel!"

"Looking for your little dog, are you?" Frau Pepplinger, the milk-woman, asked him. "I saw it with the cat two hours ago in front of the training-college on the Hasnerplatz. It was playing with a big dog."

Pfleiderer swore. How often he had had to look for those two little beasts, as he called them when he was angry. It was always the cat who led the dog astray.

And now this morning they had vanished again.

A whole pack of dogs were collected on the river bank, where they had been joined by Herr Bindernagel and his companion. All the important questions of the day were discussed, and it was not noticed that the arch-enemy of all Graz dogs, Sauertopf, the *Wasenmeister*,* with his assistant, followed at some distance by their cart, had suddenly appeared.

At once there was a general scattering. Only the innocent Herr Bindernagel remained all unsuspecting, and he got a serious fright when a rough hand seized him by the scruff of his neck, lifted him up, and threw him into the cart.

Fräulein Mittermaier had watched this procedure with an angry glare. He could not understand how a stranger could have the impudence so much as to touch his playmate. Shaking his head, the cat followed the cart, refusing to be driven away with the whip.

With mortal fear in his heart, Herr Bindernagel huddled in a corner. His little jet eyes surveyed with horror the low company by which he was surrounded. Whenever one of the companions of his fate came near him, he snapped like a mad thing.

Behind the cart, Fräulein Mittermaier still trotted, mewing softly. He was weeping for Herr Bindernagel; he was heart-broken; and as he ran along behind the cart, he was filled with a dreadful fear of losing the playmate who had so endeared himself to the little cat's heart.

Such deep grief on the part of an animal wrongly accused

*Dog-catcher.

by many of treachery should teach us how real love and loyalty can be in the animal kingdom. Instead of kicking or striking these pleading, faithful beasts, surely one should open one's heart and learn to understand the limitless love with which God has imbued them.

No titbit, however dainty, could have availed to entice that cat away from the cart. Unwavering he ran on, heart and soul bleeding, faint with grief.

CHAPTER THREE

"DO you happen to have seen my little dog?" Herr Pfleiderer anxiously asked an old newspaper-seller.

"No, no, sir, but half an hour since the dog-catcher was driving down along the river with a big cat running after him. Unless my eyes deceive me, it was your cat, the one with the funny name."

At the next corner Pfleiderer took a taxi and hurried to the dog-catcher's establishment. He reached the isolated building just as the cart with its load of yapping dogs was driving through the courtyard gate. The taxi all but ran over the bedraggled cat which was trotting behind the cart.

"Fräulein Mittermaier!" Pfleiderer cried hoarsely, just as Emmerich was about to seize the animal.

"Let that cat alone!" he added, picking the animal up in his arms.

"I can't let you have the dog unless you show me the licence and the certificate of ownership," the dog-catcher said in a self-assured tone. He was delighted at this opportunity of scoring off the worthy Councillor, who in the past had not only voted against an increase of the grant to the establishment but had made a sharp protest against its brutal methods.

"But you know who I am? I'm Councillor Pfleiderer. I'll pay the ten schillings fine straight away and send you the licence by my housekeeper."

"I have my orders; you yourself helped to draft them, sir."

"Now don't make a fuss. Just hand over my dog or it may get you into trouble."

The dog-catcher bridled.

"I'm master in my own house here and I give you the dog under protest. I'll have to have this in writing."

"You can write what you like, but I must have the dog at once."

"Not until you've signed."

Herr Sauertopf drew up a long document which sounded like a writ. He took a long time over it, while Pfleiderer drummed impatiently with his fingers on the writing-table. After reading the protest, he signed the paper. Emmerich then brought in Herr Bindernagel on his arm. The little dog yapped when he saw his master and his friend. Fräulein Mittermaier began to purr, and the two covered one another with caresses as they sat in the taxi beside Herr Pfleiderer.

Frau Wurz wept tears of delight over her restored pets, while the two truants quarrelled over their dinner bowls. There was always a truce to mutual affection at feeding time.

After dinner Herr Pfleiderer made his way to the Rathaus. He intended to take immediate steps against the dog-catcher, and possibly take out a writ against him for extortion.

"Where is the veterinary office?" he asked Kratochwil, the attendant.

"On the second floor, if you please, Herr Gemeinderat von Pfleiderer—No. 68."

On the first floor, facing the top of the staircase, there was a cardboard notice on which was printed "REGISTRAR".

Pfleiderer came to a standstill, remembering Loisi. Had not she, or he himself, mentioned the registrar's office

that morning? Yes, that was it; she wanted a forged certificate of domicile. Well, she would have to wait a long time. He, Pfleiderer, councillor and owner of nine houses, wasn't going to turn forger for the sake of a little goose like that!

But what do good intentions avail when love takes hold?—especially when the lover is at that age which is like a perilous cliff; however bold the climber, once he slips he is lost.

Slowly Pfleiderer descended the stairs leading from the second to the first floor. He had just relieved his heart of some pithy words, and duly signed the memorandum which in future would make it impossible for the *Herr Wasenmeister* to give rein to his low craving to capture the pedigree dogs of important citizens and restore them at extortionate prices.

But before he reached the first floor, his eye again fell on door No. 68. The letters of the word REGISTRAR burned themselves into his brain. They seemed to start from the cardboard and hurl themselves into the face of the hesitating man.

"I could just have a look into the matter. That doesn't mean Loisi is going to get her way," he said to himself, and passed through the door.

"Good heavens, Herr Gemeinderat! To what do I owe the honour?"

"How do you do, Herr Kirchner; I hope you're well? How is your good wife?"

"Oh, can you have forgotten, Herr Gemeinderat? She passed away two years ago, God rest her soul. But the Herr Gemeinderat was himself at the funeral."

"Oh, yes, so I was. You must forgive me, Herr Kirchner; there's so much to think about, things go out of one's head."

The widower tittered.

"I'm married again now. We're just expecting a little one; perhaps in a week, perhaps even earlier. My wife can't reckon it up exactly." He thumped on an enormous tome lying before him on the sloping desk.

"There'll soon be another page to fill in, another Grazer citizen to immortalize."

"Aha, the birth certificate!" said Herr Pfleiderer casually. He had already read the name inscribed in copperplate on the label.

"And now, what can I do for you, sir?"

Pfleiderer had been thinking quickly.

"Couldn't I be godfather?"

"Oh, please; that would be a great honour for us."

"How exactly are these registrations made, Herr Kirchner?"

"Aha! The Herr Gemeinderat is a bachelor, of course, so he doesn't need to trouble us about his children. Well, you see, here are all the details, down to the date of death."

The registrar drew his finger over the white page.

"Do you give a certificate of domicile, too?"

"If it's a Grazer, of course."

"And you have to do all that yourself?"

"Why should I? All I do is to sign as registrar and stamp it."

Pfleiderer's eyes had already discovered a pigeon-hole under which was written "birth certificates".

"Quite an interesting job you have here. Just let me see how it's done."

The official bustlingly pulled a certificate of domicile from the pigeon-hole and began to explain:

"Well, up here we get the two schilling stamp; the details are precisely filled in, and underneath comes the rubber-stamp, and under that my signature." Pfleiderer

kept his eye on the rubber-stamp. He was no criminal. As his brain worked hard, the sweat stood out on his brow and his breath came heavily through his nose. An idea had entered his mind.

"Tell me, doesn't Registrar Nowotni work next door?"

"No, he's in No. 72."

"I wonder if you'd be good enough to fetch him in? I don't want to talk to him before the other men in his office."

"Certainly, Herr Gemeinderat; but Nowotni has a room to himself."

The blood forced itself up Herr Pfleiderer's neck, flushing his face and making the beads of sweat on his brow stand out visibly.

"It would be better if you wouldn't mind fetching him in here. There may be someone with him."

"Certainly, sir, certainly."

The official hurried out of the room. He was delighted. Now he could do without that relative. He wasn't going to let this wealthy godfather, Pfleiderer, the man of property, slip through his fingers. It was only to be hoped the child wasn't a girl!

What are good intentions, what does morality mean to a man, fear of dishonour, of being branded as a thief or forger? What becomes of his innate sense of honour and the acquired idea of *mine* and *thine*, once an idea has fixed itself in his brain driving out all thought of religion and the law?

Breathing deeply, and glancing furtively and timidly around him, Pfleiderer stood in front of the building. In his breast-pocket crinkled the domicile-certificate to which the rubber-stamp had duly been applied. He, whose honour no man had ever questioned, was now a thief, a criminal. Stertorously his breath came through his nose.

He could have beaten himself for his folly. When Registrar Kirchner had returned to the room with Nowotni, Pfleiderer had not known what to say. He had finally stammered out an incoherent invitation to the skittle club.

Slowly he passed round the monument in front of the Rathaus, without once glancing at the stately building behind. He didn't want to attract attention by unusual haste. He looked everyone straight in the face, and tried to read in the expressions of the passers-by whether his misconduct was apparent. He still trembled when he thought that someone might easily have come in while he was in the act of pulling the form out of the pigeonhole and stamping it.

Thus did Pfleiderer, the respectable landlord and honourable city father, turn thief. This offspring of worthy parents, who would surely now turn in their grave, had entered upon lawless ways. Anger, unbridled fury seized the man when he thought of the ward for whose sake he had perpetrated this deed. She would have to wait a long time before he gave her the form. No, he was not going to add a fresh crime to his record.

Panting heavily, snoring a little, and emitting intermittent low moans, Herr Bindernagel lay in the corner of the sofa on his down cushion covered with a folded check wrap. The dreadful adventure of the afternoon was still with him, even in his sleep. The shock had been too severe, the torture too much for the pampered little fellow. In the other corner Fräulein Mittermaier sat purring, licking the last remains of the street dust from his coat, and from time to time throwing anxious glances at his sleeping friend.

Good intentions are often short-lived. The resolution to say nothing to Loisi about the stolen certificate soon yielded before the urge to spring his surprise; but only

on condition that she gave him a definite promise of marriage. Then Pfleiderer had a sudden shock. He remembered that his ward had mentioned not only a domicile-certificate, but also a certificate of baptism. So he had only done half the job. How was he to get hold of such a document? It is only in a minister's house that a certificate of baptism is to be obtained.

Shaking his head vigorously, the love-sick man put away from him the thought of running into danger a second time. The little devil would have to get someone else to obtain the paper for her. He would do no more.

Chance often acts as a *deus ex machina* in this life. That evening, before Herr Pfleiderer left for the restaurant of the *Hotel Zur Post*, Frau Wurz informed him that Herr and Frau Kirchner wished to speak to him.

The advanced condition in which the registrar's wife found herself reminded Herr Pfleiderer of the new responsibility he had assumed. He cursed himself, and Loisi, who had brought him into this situation and loaded upon him a fresh, even if somewhat distant relationship. He knew only too well, from experience, that not only can godchildren often be a burden; their parents, too, may become a thorn in the flesh.

"Certainly, certainly, Frau Kirchner; if it's a boy I'll stand sponsor," Pfleiderer said, stifling his exasperation.

"But what else can it be but a boy?" the prospective father proclaimed boastfully.

CHAPTER FOUR

OBERLEHRER POLSTERHANS looked severely at Loisi over his eyeglasses, which stuck out at a sharp angle from his nose. In his hand he was holding an ordinary American alarum-clock, to the little metal feet of which a small box had been fitted. The indicator was set for a minute to twelve.

"What's the meaning of this childishness, Loisi Hacker? I've been watching you all the lesson playing with this thing instead of attending to what I was saying; can you . . ."

The stern schoolmaster was interrupted in his lecture, and turned in horror to the clock in his hand. Coming out of the box he could hear his own voice repeating the physics lesson he had just given. His shrill tones, rasping burr, and monotonous sing-song intonation were exactly reproduced. In a burst of fury he threw Loisi's latest invention on to the table, so that the little box was broken and the wax record inside it smashed to atoms.

As a result of this reprehensible misdemeanour, Loisi had to leave the Lyceum for ever, vacating her place in favour of a less inventive and more attentive pupil.

"How can you be so foolish and make fun of the masters? Now no school in Graz will take you."

"That doesn't worry me in the least, Guardian. I'm fed up with sitting in these infant schools listening to all their nonsense. Besides, I'm much too big and all the other girls laugh at me. What good am I doing in the Lyceum? I can't learn anything there that will help me with my engineering."

"Oh, haven't you dropped that mad scheme yet?"

"No, and I've no intention of doing so; and if you won't help me I'll just go and get apprenticed to Blaschek, the blacksmith. He has promised to take me and get me accepted by the guild."

With eyes lit by love, Pfleiderer looked up at the girl. *Donnerwetter*, she got prettier every day! What a strapping girl she is, he thought. What a lovely picture! She was holding Herr Bindernagel on her right arm, Fräulein Mittermaier on her left, and it was taking her all her time to prevent the snarling, snapping terrier from biting the contentedly purring cat in the ear. Every now and again the dog would pass his long tongue over Loisi's cheek or snuff at her hair.

"Have you forgotten what I said about those documents? Don't you think it would be better for me to go to a technical college instead of being pinned down for years as a blacksmith's apprentice? And even after that, heaven knows how long I should have to fool about before I get anywhere?"

Pfleiderer turned his eyes furtively to the old Biedermeier writing-desk. In one of the many little drawers of the top, lay the stolen domicile-certificate. As yet Loisi had no idea; he had never given her the slightest hint. He knew well enough that if he mentioned it she would never cease to plague and torment him to get her the form of baptism too. No, no, he told himself firmly, under no circumstances would he allow himself again to be persuaded into doing anything that might bring him into conflict with the law.

A knock interrupted Herr Bindernagel's snarls for a moment, and he broke into furious barking as the housekeeper entered the room.

"Shut up, you little brute!" Pfleiderer cried, but his words only made the dog bark louder still.

"Good gracious, it's Loiserl. We don't see much of you nowadays. How are you getting on? Oh, what I wanted to say was that Herr Kirchner is outside; he's very red in the face and all of a sweat. He seems all worked up, and came . . ."

The sentence remained unfinished. Framed in the doorway stood the heated registrar, wiping the perspiration from his brow with his sleeve and staring with frightened eyes into the room.

"You must excuse my unceremonious entry, but I've come straight from the Reverend Latzinger, of St. Andrew's Church, which is our parish . . . Get away, you nasty little beast!"

Kirchner shook his hand. In his excitement he had caught Loisi by the arm, and Herr Bindernagel, deeply resenting this, had dug his teeth viciously into the excited man's thumb and refused to let go.

"And he's such a tiny little devil!" Kirchner realized that he must do his best to put up with the godfather's dog. "He's a dear little dog, and sticks up for his family. Yes, what I was about to say, Herr Gemeinderat; the minister says you can only stand godfather to *one* boy."

"Yes, that's what I said, Herr Kirchner."

"Yes, that's quite in order, but things are different because you see my wife has had twins; two boys."

Pfleiderer looked up, startled.

"That's why I hurried here," the happy father went on, "to see whether you wanted to be godfather to the first-born or the second? Then I shall have to find out whether the second godfather, Kovacz the tailor, is agreeable. The christening is on Sunday week."

"Anything you like will suit me, Herr Kirchner; anything at all," said Pfleiderer impatiently.

"Well, then, I can send a car for you at half-past two on Sunday week?"

"That'll be all right; I shan't forget."

Loisi had been following the conversation attentively. After Herr Kirchner had gone out with Frau Wurz, she dropped the dog and cat to the floor and turned on Pfleiderer.

"You must find out at the christening how to lay hands on a baptism certificate."

"Have you lost all sense of right and wrong; do you want to make a thief of me?"

"How you do exaggerate it all! It wouldn't be hurting anybody."

"I'll tell you what, Loisi. You come to the christening too, and you'll have to find out for yourself whether there's any chance of stealing a form. I'm not going to have anything to do with it. If you get the baptism certificate I promise to get you a certificate of domicile."

CHAPTER FIVE

THERE were a large number of cars drawn up outside St. Andrew's Church. The daughter of a prominent townsman was being married. Curious onlookers were crowded round the main entrance, and nobody paid any attention to the vestry door when two cars drove up to it. From the first Herr Kirchner alighted, followed by the nurse, Frau Guggenbauer. She was carrying one of the infants, warmly wrapped up, on either arm. The two godfathers emerged from the second car, followed by Loisi.

In the trees a flock of sparrows twittered, and the spring sun shone warmly from the sky. From the Dominikaner barracks came a sound of bugles.

The wedding was soon over. The two godfathers proudly held the crying babies over the font; and afterwards Loisi asked to be allowed to fill in the baptism certificate of her guardian's godchild. The minister acquiesced with an indulgent smile, and when Loisi carelessly made a large blot on the first form he provided a fresh one. No one save the distracted Herr Pfleiderer noticed the girl fold the spoiled form and slip it into the opening of her dress, after noiselessly pressing upon it the minister's rubber stamp.

"If I gave you away now, they'd have you in gaol," Pfleiderer said threateningly to his ward that evening.

"In the first place I'm still under age; and then I should plead that you knew all about the affair. I might even say that it was you who put the idea into my head."

"You're a public danger! You've got to be treated with great care. But what do I get if I produce the certificate of domicile?"

Pfleiderer was no actor. Even as he asked the question he gave away the hiding-place of the paper. Quite unconsciously his glance had travelled to the desk where it was hidden.

Loisi, who had followed the glance, guessed what it meant.

"Oh, now I know. You don't need to get the paper; you've got it already in the desk!"

Pfleiderer turned pale.

"What, you know! Have you been ransacking my desk? I shouldn't wonder if you've already taken the form!"

"Well, now you've given yourself away. I didn't know anything about it; nothing at all!"

Pfleiderer had regained control of himself. She wasn't going to have her own way so easily.

"I repeat: what do I get?"

"A little kiss, Guardian."

"And what about the promise to marry me in two years' time?"

"How clever you are, Guardian. What could you do if I gave such a promise and then broke it?"

"You must swear by your mother's memory."

"My mother in heaven would forgive me if I broke such an oath."

A deep sigh escaped Pfleiderer.

"Won't you at least promise to think the matter over?"

"With all my heart."

With closed eyes the lovesick man took the girl's kiss, after giving her the form. He dug his fingers into the back of the chair lest he should be tempted to take her in his arms and never let her go.

Loisi romped with Herr Bindernagel on the carpet, singing and shouting for joy, while Fräulein Mittermaier sat nearby, watching this mad behaviour with surprise and indignation.

Alois Hacker's application for admission to the Untersberg Technikum was accepted, and the reply reached Loisi in the holiday resort, Krieglach.

On the 1st September a young student whose movements had something feminine about them arrived at Untersberg.

The youth was Aloisia Hacker.

For three weeks she had been living as a young man in a boarding-house in the Währingerstrasse in Vienna. The transformation from girl to man had been made in her guardian's house. She had crept out during the night, having had her luggage taken to the station in the afternoon. She had had her first man's suit made in Frohnleiten. She had told the tailor that it was a practical joke. Her underlinen and boots she bought in various shops in Graz, and she had several suits made by various tailors in Berlin.

Loisi had felt a good deal of hesitation about the Technikum when her acceptance, under the name of Alois Hacker, had come through. The authorities made it a rule that all students should live in the establishment. There were no separate bedrooms, but in addition to the dormitories, there were some smaller rooms with four beds for the senior years.

Loisi went into daily training to get rid of all superfluous fat. She submitted to a systematic course of physical exercises, and acquired the slim figure she had hoped for; and yet, despite her man's clothes and shoes, despite her close-cropped hair, there was something about her which made her unusual.

Her request to live outside the establishment was turned down, and Loisi finally decided to share a room with three other students. She told herself that it would never occur to anyone to take her for a girl. She would keep a tight hold on herself and behave as inconspicuously as possible, and she could always find a chance to slip into bed unobserved. For months she practised walking like a man, learned to whistle popular airs, as boys do, and did all she could to eliminate anything that might give away her true sex.

She was horrified, on arriving in Untersberg, to learn that only second-termers were allowed to occupy the smaller dormitories. She now regretted the whole enterprise. How would she manage to spend a whole year among twenty youths without betraying herself? When this news was broken to her in the office of the institution, she had to force back her tears.

"Your bed is Number 12 in dormitory 1. The numbers are the same for the lockers in the anteroom. Great importance is attached to orderliness here, and I advise you to read the regulations carefully."

The reception clerk handed Loisi a thin pamphlet and two keys.

"This is your locker key, and this the key of your desk in the lecture room. Yours will be room Six." He straightened the pince-nez on his nose, bent his head over a plan, drew his finger over the paper, and then went on, speaking through his nose, "Left hand side, third row from the front. Yours is the corner desk; you'll find your name on it."

She nodded, still in the grip of her anxiety.

"Have you more than one christian name?"

"No, just Loisi."

He stared hard at her, and before she could explain, said:

"Alois, Alois! Isn't that right?"

"Yes, yes. They used to call me by the other at home."

"You won't be addressed by pet names here."

The porter dragged the somewhat weighty trunk upstairs, and in a Saxon dialect, which Loisi did not understand, called the new-comer's attention to its weight, asking what on earth she had got inside it.

The only word she understood was the word "bitch" which he had applied to the trunk. She stared at the man in horror; but he only gave a friendly grin and threw the trunk down in front of a long row of lockers.

"Number twelve is yours."

The girl's "yes" came with an effort.

"Hand me over the key."

Without thinking, but obeying a lifelong habit, she reached with her right hand under her left arm. Then once more the tell-tale red rose from her neck to her face. She could have kicked herself. Couldn't she forget that she no longer carried a vanity-bag hanging from her left elbow? She hurriedly thrust her hand in her trousers pocket and brought out the key, and she was about to hand the bunch to the old man when she thought better of it.

"Thanks; I'll unpack myself."

"You'd best be careful about it; there'll be an inspection, and everything's got to be in its place."

The porter stood calmly by, his watery, bloodshot eyes fixed with a fuddled, questioning look on the new pupil. Loisi was perplexed. What could the man want now?

"That heavy trunk is worth a thaler at least."

Loisi understood now and placed a five mark note in the man's open hand.

"Never mind about change."

Beads of perspiration were standing out under the peak of her cap. Thanking her, the porter slunk away, shaking his head and muttering to himself *Herrjemmerschnee*, what a booby! He's home-sick, wants his mother!

Locker inspection? Loisi shuddered. In that case she could not unpack all her things. She had stupidly brought many feminine articles with her too; why, she did not know. These she would have to leave in the trunk. Shudders ran down her spine as she set to work. If only no one would come! Hurriedly she stuffed the lovely nightdress with the lace insertion into the very bottom of the trunk. Although she had been wearing men's clothes for weeks now, she had not been able to get used to them. They were so tight and made her so uncomfortable. The stiff collars were particularly cramping. To-day she had put on her "plus-four" sports suit for the first time, and it felt like a strait-waistcoat. Even at the station she had realized that it would be impossible for her to wear a pullover. This garment most distinctly showed the shape of her body and, in spite of her slender line, betrayed that she was neither man nor boy.

A hubbub sounded up the stairs. Loisi started, then bent over her trunk and pretended to be busy inside it. Along the corridor came three pupils of the Technikum, talking and laughing aloud, bumping into one another boisterously, and tramping in step on the hard flagstones.

"Look what a fine profile!" cried Fritz Hagedorn, a Berlin youth, pointing at the bent figure of Loisi who had her back turned to the advancing youths. Then, breaking loose from his companions, he winked at them, glided up, and delivered a stinging smack on the part exposed to view. Loisi almost fell into the trunk, but stopped herself with her hands. A berserk rage took possession of her. The students' roar of laughter rang in her ears, and she

felt a stinging pain where the blow had fallen. With one heave she was up, looking wildly round her, and then she rushed at Hans Kaiser, a lanky Hanoverian. Before he could defend himself, two stinging smacks fell on his cheeks.

"Are you mad? It wasn't me!"

Fritz Hagedorn slapped his thigh and roared. Loisi's anger increased, and a blow from her first landed on his nose, making the blood flow.

"You miserable swine! Do you want another? Then come on."

Before the youths could rush on the girl, a door opened at the end of the corridor, and Professor Hirsebrei emerged.

"What's all this disturbance? Will you kindly stop it."

Hurrying up, he dragged the pugnacious Loisi away from Leopold Geier, the third youth, at whose long fair hair she was clutching with both hands while she kicked his shins lustily. She had almost set upon the Professor as he intervened vigorously. She had not heard his call, and thought it was one of the students who was gripping her arm. Just in time, she dropped her hand and stared in consternation at the corpulent gentleman.

"You're making a good start, behaving like a rowdy. What's your name?"

Loisi's breath came in jerks. She muttered hurriedly:

"Loi . . . Alois Hacker."

"I shall report you to the Rector." Then he turned to the youths. "Report yourselves to me in half an hour's time."

Rubbing the smarting place, Loisi looked after the youths as they vanished round the bend of the corridor. Fritz Hagedorn was still shaking his fist at her.

"I'm not going to let myself be treated in such a way.

Suppose, Herr Rektor, someone hit you like that; would you take it quietly ?"

"What are you thinking of, Alois Hacker. How can you imagine me in such a situation ? This is no place for hooliganism ; let me tell you that once and for all."

And he looked sternly at the three delinquents.

"Who was it who permitted himself this unseemly jest with this pupil ?"

Hagedorn stepped forward.

"It was I, Herr Rektor. I didn't mean any harm."

"No harm indeed," cried Loisi. "It smarts so, I can't sit down !"

The youths stifled their laughter.

"Be quiet. Speak when you're spoken to."

Loisi raised her eyebrows superciliously and fastened the top button of her jacket as the Rector's eyes fell unconsciously on the pullover.

"I don't want to issue punishments before the beginning of term. But I warn you ; any disorderly behaviour and you go into the detention room or out of the college."

CHAPTER SIX

"A FINE state of things, Herr Pfleiderer, me not knowing where the child is. I've brought her up from the day of her birth and it's only right I should be told where Loisi is and what she's up to!"

Old Crescentia stood with flashing eyes in front of the councillor, looking at him defiantly.

"But read the letter Loisi has sent for you. You can see from that that she's alive."

"And why can't she write to me direct? Why am I not supposed to know where she is?"

"But read then. Besides, Loisi told you before she went to Vienna that she would send you news through me. Loisi doesn't want to be disturbed in her studies."

"A crazy idea for a rich girl to want to be an engineer instead of learning to cook and getting married! It's old Herr Hacker that's to blame for that. Who knows what might happen to the poor child among all those Germans! All alone, and only sixteen! It'll be the death of me!"

The old woman wiped the tears from her wrinkled face with the corner of her apron, and unfolded the letter. Half aloud, she read:

"*Dear Crescentia.*" She glanced quickly from the paper to Herr Pfleiderer. "You see how fond the girl is of me. She writes Dear Crescentia." Then she went on: "Lord love us, she doesn't even get a *Topfenstrudel* * where she is. Well, that's a bit of a comfort. For months past Loisi wouldn't touch any sweets because she wanted to get

*Austrian cheesecake.

thin like all these crazy wenches nowadays. I was worried out of my life that she'd make herself ill. She was always jumping about throwing her heels into the air and waving her hands like a windmill and rolling about on the carpet like that Herr Bindernagel of yours does before the fire in winter. She'd gone completely daft. And now she wants a *Topfenstrudel*, so she's coming to her senses again. She may get fat again. Nay, she'd rather look like a hop-pole."

"I'm going to see Loisi the day after to-morrow, so perhaps you can manage so that I can take the things with me."

"I'm coming with you, Herr Gemeinderat; I've got to see Loisi and find out for myself what sort of a school that is she's going to."

"That is quite out of the question. Loisi won't let anyone know where she is."

Crescentia tossed her head indignantly and muttered between her teeth:

"Anyone! Do you call me 'anyone'? Pah!" She flounced out of the room without so much as looking round.

The evening before Pfleiderer's departure, a girl brought the things Loisi had asked for. Crescentia did not come herself. As Herr Pfleiderer opened the parcel, he discovered, amongst other things, articles of lingerie for which Loisi would certainly find no use at the moment. Only the books and instruments she had asked for were packed in the box; the cakes and buns were stuffed into the suit-case, and the superfluous under-linen was thrown carelessly on an arm-chair.

After dinner Pfleiderer began to think. Supposing the suspicious Crescentia joined him at the station? He could not prevent her travelling the same way. The old woman,

who idolized Loisi, was capable of anything. She might even make a public scene which would compel him to postpone the journey. The only possibility of avoiding complications was for him to take the night train to Vienna. He had only half an hour. He finished packing, and telephoned for a taxi. Five minutes later the car was at the front door, and Frau Wurz was greatly astonished to hear that her lord and master had so suddenly changed his plans. . . .

The night express was sweeping towards Semmering. Pfleiderer sat in the corner of his compartment dreaming of his meeting with Loisi. Her letter, with its urgent request that he should come at once, caused him to hope that the girl had something to say to him, and this something could only mean the beginning of a more intimate relationship.

The moon hung over the ghostly peaks jutting into the night sky, as the train slid along the gleaming steel ribbon, thundered through the tunnels, and raced over deep gorges spanned by handsome bridges.

At Paperbach the tones of a mandoline trembled from the window of the station building. A woman's clear voice sang:

"*Die Lieb'ist halt was Eigenes.*"

In spite of his weariness, Pfleiderer went on humming the old melody as he sat half asleep.

CHAPTER SEVEN

"I'M going straight to the police to tell them all about it. It's not right. What did Herr Pfleiderer want to take the night train for? Why didn't he go by the early fast train to-day as he said he was going to yesterday, I should like to know?"

"I don't know either, my dear Crescentia. All of a sudden there was the taxi and the master gone with his things."

"And just you look here, Frau Wurz!" Crescentia ran to the arm-chair, picked up the lingerie intended for Loisi, and held it under Frau Wurz's nose. "Now I know for sure that something awful has happened to Loisi. The Herr Gemeinderat is a scoundrel. I'll go to the police court and have him summoned. Here's winter coming on and the poor girl more than likely having to run about in silk stockings catching her death of cold. The blackguard; he's taken the poor thing off somewhere and he's keeping her hidden away. I'll have him summoned, the nasty old wretch!"

"Oh, stop that. How can you dare say such things about the master?"

"You're most likely in it too, you old pimp."

"You'll have to prove that before the court. And now get out of this."

Frau Wurz wrenched open the door and made a gesture which was unmistakable.

With the bundle of underclothes on her arm, Loisi's old housekeeper strode through the door.

"You just dare go to the police and see what you'll get!" Frau Würz shouted down the stairs. "If any letters come from Loisi I'll send them to you. Don't show your face here again!"

CHAPTER EIGHT

LOISI'S urgent letter to Herr Pfleiderer was written for important reasons.

The very first night in the dormitory had given her a foretaste of what was to come.

Word had gone round that one of the "greens"—as the new pupils were called—was a very turbulent person and had had the nerve to attack three students of the senior year because of a harmless joke.

Among the twenty occupants of the dormitory there were eight greens, including Loisi, and twelve senior students. The new-comers were always divided among the elder students to facilitate the maintenance of discipline.

At a quarter to seven the bell rang for supper.

Loisi had quite forgotten to read the book of rules. Her head was in too much of a whirl. The tell-tale articles of clothing and toilet she had locked up in her trunk; but there were other things which looked suspicious. Rolf Götze, who was unpacking by the next bed, sniffed when he saw Loisi's large manicure set.

"We seem to be starting a beauty parlour. This green looks as though he'd been a barber's apprentice before he came here."

Loisi flushed. Once more she lost her temper, and glared defiantly at the mocking group.

"He seems to have dashed through the nursery in the Orient express," sneered one tall callow youth with fair hair. "I'm wondering whether he's going to take the trouble to introduce himself."

"Hacker, my name's Alois Hacker. I'm from Graz.

Anyone who knows anything about railways knows that the Orient express doesn't go through Styria."

"Oho!" cried a red-cheeked fellow, short and fat. "It's a Nazi!"

Loisi did not know what a Nazi was. She had never heard that it is the nickname given to Austrians in Germany.

"My name's Alois, not Nazi."

"Oh, of course, of course!" the others shouted in chorus.

"I say, what do you charge for a manicure?"

"With nails like yours you ought to go to the blacksmith's," retorted Loisi.

The others roared.

"*Donnerwetter*, what cheek!" shouted the callow youth.

Once more the bell rang.

"Come on, you fellows!" shouted Kurt Schramm, the dormitory prefect. "Get down to the dining-room or you'll have the old man jawing again. We don't want to get him going the first day."

All dashed to the door, scuffling and struggling, laughing and shouting.

"Well, and what about you?" Schramm looked at Loisi who made no attempt to follow. "You've got to go down whether you're hungry or not."

With a characteristic feminine gesture Loisi brushed back her hair from her forehead.

One hundred and ten students sat at four long tables, all junior years and greens.

The new-comers introduced themselves with curt bows, and Loisi too got up and nodded.

"Alois Hacker."

They all looked at her. News had already gone round the tables, round the whole hall, that the green Nazi was a pugnacious fellow from the Alps in the wilds of Austria.

"What are you all staring at ?" Loisi asked in an angry voice, and taking a small pocket mirror from her waistcoat, she looked at herself and then glanced defiantly around.

"Do you carry a knife too ?" a piping voice mocked across the table.

"A sneeze would be enough to blow *you* over."

The entry of the bursar prevented another fight. Loisi had realized that in this place only defiance, or fists would help. She'd show them !

The bursar passed from table to table, greeting his acquaintances cordially. His appearance was no advertisement for the cooking of the establishment. He was small and shrivelled, and had a shrunken face with a yellowish skin. The students had christened him Spitzmaus.

The new arrivals were introduced.

"Stand up," Loisi's right-hand neighbour whispered to her. "You've got to introduce yourself to Spitzmaus too."

"Alois Hacker," said Loisi.

"From Graz," added someone across the table.

"Oh, an Austrian ?"

"Yes, Herr Spitzmaus."

A suppressed titter from behind table-napkins was audible.

The bursar drew himself up ; he only reached to Loisi's shoulder. His yellow complexion changed to the grey of asphalt.

"You'll report yourself to the Herr Rektor after supper."

And with his hands behind his back, the fingers writhing together, the little man stamped out of the room. Another roar broke loose round the table. Loisi's *faux pas* was shouted from table to table and passed from one dining-hall to the other. She looked round her, nonplussed.

"That was good!" said Schramm. "You're making a fine start."

Loisi was not much impressed with the meal. She was used to better fare. The insipid dishes reminded her of the jaundiced bursar. She consoled herself with the thought that she had the means now and again to visit one of the better restaurants in the town.

"Alois Hacker," the Rector rapped with a metal paper-knife on his desk, "you were specially recommended to me by your guardian as quiet and orderly. That affair with the three other students gave me food for thought. In that case your conduct was to some extent excusable, although it is necessary in such cases to exercise self-control."

"Very good of you," thought Loisi. "I wonder if, supposing you had got a smack like that you would remember your Bible and offer the other cheek."

"But how could you have the effrontery to call the Herr Ökonom Schneegans *Spitzmaus*?"

"But isn't that his name? My neighbour at table told me I had to introduce myself to Herr Spitzmaus."

The whole dormitory was indignant that Loisi should have split to the Rector about Karl Heinz Eisner. It was decided to take it out of the new-comer.

In the gymnasium ground Loisi sat on a bench and considered her situation. Bedtime was approaching and she was afraid to return to the dormitory. How was she to undress? If only she had had a corner bed she might have been able to turn away from the others; but she had a neighbour on either side. She had made an attempt to go to bed immediately after leaving the Rector, but was politely informed by Schramm that no one was allowed into the dormitory until half-past eight.

Not only was anxiety gnawing at Loisi's vitals, but also to some extent hunger. She was racking her brain to think of a way of getting to bed unnoticed. How would it be if she waited to the last, when all the others would have settled down?

The college clock struck quarter to nine. The porter crossed the court with a large sheep-dog running before him.

"Hello, hello, what are you doing out here? You'll have to get to bed now. Don't do that; don't touch that dog; he bites!"

The dog sniffed at Loisi, allowed himself to be stroked, and stood up with his forepaws on the bench. The porter looked at Loisi in astonishment.

"Come along now; get along up: and don't start any more fighting."

Only Schramm and one other student were still up. All the rest lay in their beds. It did not strike Loisi as strange that they all appeared to be already asleep; some even snoring a little too loudly.

The senior student of the dormitory came up to Loisi from the other end of the room.

"I'd advise you to have a look at the regulations to-morrow so that you won't make any more bloomers, and in particular get to bed at the proper time for greens!"

Looking round timidly, Loisi began to undress. Shoes, stockings, sports jacket, pullover and knickerbockers all flew on to the chair. The pyjamas were hurriedly drawn on, and with one bound she sprang into bed, only to leap up again immediately with a loud yell.

Heads appeared out of all the bedclothes and a roar of laughter filled the room.

Someone had placed a number of wet sponges in Loisi's bed.

The victim quickly grasped the situation. Pulling out sponge after sponge, she hurled them right and left at the others, who were now coming up right and left in pyjamas and nightshirts, shrieking with laughter. Rolf Götze was standing on his bed. With one blow Loisi brought him down, then she leapt into his bed, and pulled the clothes up to her neck.

"Hi!" shouted the dislodged owner, "that's my bed; get out of it!"

With a kick, Loisi loosed his grip on the clothes.

"Let's toss him!" came the cry, and before Loisi could realize what was happening, many hands dragged her out, still wrapped in the blankets, into the middle of the room and there "tossed" her.

Time after time she soared into the air and was caught in the blanket. She held her pyjamas tightly together and clenched her teeth.

At last they stopped. Loisi, her face white, but without saying a word, lashed out with her fists on all sides. Then she ran to her bed, pulled the dry sheet from Götze's, who as he came dashing up was met with a punch in the right eye, and a wet sheet over his head, jumped into her own bed, rolled herself in the dry sheet, and pulled up the bedclothes.

"Look out!" came a warning from the end of the room. "Someone coming!"

In a flash they were all in bed.

Professor Reimer, who was on duty, appeared in the room, followed by a young manservant.

"Lights out!" the Professor ordered when he had convinced himself that all were in bed. He had deliberately ignored the odd sponges lying about on the floor.

On the following nights Loisi was left alone, but she was afraid that the practical jokes might begin again, and tried to think of a way which would make it possible for

her to sleep alone. She was very much afraid lest her sex should be discovered, which would mean the end of her stay at the college, and indeed an end of her studies. Her one consolation was her work. All the subjects interested her, but she had a special weakness for electricity.

From eight in the morning until one in the afternoon there were classes. The teachers changed every hour. Physics, chemistry, mathematics, geometry, geography, mining, engineering, electricity, hydraulics, and building were the main subjects of the curriculum.

After the first quarter, practical lessons in the workshops were to begin for the greens.

Loisi had to go through many more brushes with her fellow students. They taunted her with lack of cleanliness because she did not strip to the waist when she washed in the mornings and did not use the shower baths provided. She took no notice of these taunts, but bided her time. She joined in the games. In Graz she had already been a keen football fan.

In a short time she became one of the best forwards in the green eleven, her dash winning her a great reputation. In the hundred yards she was favourite and beat the previous year's winner. All this violent exercise and the plain fare thinned her and gave her a more masculine appearance. Her one ambition was still to have a room to herself in which she could wash, study, and experiment undisturbed.

The college staff were extremely pleased with Loisi. She was a most attentive pupil and easily performed all the tasks set her.

After a time she heard by chance that Fellner, the supervisor of the electrical workshops who lived in one of the houses adjoining the workshops, wanted to let two furnished rooms. She called and asked to see them.

"The Rector won't allow you to live outside the college," said Herr Fellner.

"I hope to be able to fix that up. My guardian is coming in a few days' time and will be seeing the Rector. Besides, your house is in the college grounds, not outside."

An express letter was sent the same day to Herr Pfleiderer in Graz, and four days later the councillor arrived.

Loisi was summoned to the guest-room during the midday break. Her guardian hardly recognized her in her man's clothes. It was fortunate that the porter had at once left the room so that no one heard his astonished:

"*Jessas*, girl, what a sight!"

Loisi looked round terrified.

"For heaven's sake don't let anyone hear you. You mustn't call me 'girl'. You must call me Alois; *Alois*."

In the afternoon Herr Pfleiderer had a long talk with the Rector.

"It is against our rules, Herr Pfleiderer; I can't allow it."

"But, Herr Professor, this is a case of unusual talent, perhaps even genius. The g . . . boy can't work and experiment properly in the common rooms. I have brought all his instruments. You have no idea of the inventions Alois has already made."

Despite the strict rules, Alois Hacker moved into the two rooms belonging to Fellner late that afternoon. In the evening Pfleiderer took his ward, who was almost beside herself with delight at not having to sleep any more with the youths in the dormitory, to a good wine-restaurant. When she came home her first action was to make a dash for the bathroom.

Loisi was now content. She rigged herself up a little workshop in one room and spent every spare minute over her experiments.

CHAPTER NINE

IN No. 326 East Broad Street, Newhaven, Connecticut, lived Sydney Montford, the physicist. He was starving in wealthy America, the land which pays such huge salaries to men of genius. His young brain was full of great plans which would revolutionize the world. He looked very ill, and at first glance might have been taken to be in an advanced stage of tuberculosis.

Montford worked day and night, earning a scanty living by contributions to scientific journals and daily papers. These articles were badly paid, but the student's requirements were so modest that he managed to keep going on the few dollars they brought in.

His ambition was nothing less than to annul the law of gravity. He had never mentioned his secret to a soul. Day after day he experimented, and refused to admit defeat when, often after months of work, his efforts proved fruitless.

Isaac Newton's theory of the law of gravitation, the earth's power of attracting everything to its centre, Montford recognized; but he was obsessed by the idea that it was possible not only to check falling bodies in mid-air without the use of any outwardly visible force, but even to prevent the fall altogether, so that an object thrown into the air could, regardless of its weight, be maintained stationary in space.

Montford was in no way impressed by the fact that aeroplanes and airships heavier than air could be held up and navigated in the ether. This was only a matter

of motor power or gas, and the law of gravity was only counteracted so long as these external forces continued to function.

Syd Montford's aim was to make a law of nature impotent, and when at last people came to hear of it, he was laughed at. The comic papers seized upon the student's portrait and the scientists publicly pulverized him.

The young visionary fumed with rage, and cursed himself for having been fool enough to let himself be driven by his great need into writing a few words about his secret.

He was to learn how in life evil often conceals good. The Untersberg Technikum had its attention drawn to him through the discussion opened by eminent scientists in the papers. The professor of physics placed before the Rector a translation he had himself made of the American's article, and recommended that he should be invited to join the college staff. The college council deliberated long, and finally resolved to ask Sydney Montford whether he would be willing to accept a lectureship. The offer was made specially attractive by a promise that he would be afforded every help and encouragement, and furnished with facilities to pursue the path upon which he had entered. To begin with, he would only be required to teach students who knew English and to lecture in that language, but it was stipulated that he must make every endeavour to study German.

When the American press learned that the dreamer who proposed to attack the laws of nature had been appointed for five years to a German technical college, they united in an outburst of mockery against the foolish Germans, and the old jests about Sydney Montford were hashed up anew. The *New York Journal* asked sarcastically why the able physicist had booked a passage on the *Flying Eagle*,

the largest ship in the world. Surely for him, the man who proposed to defeat the law of gravity, it must be a simple matter to discard these outmoded methods; surely he should be in a position to have himself projected across to Germany through the higher strata of the atmosphere by means of light rays.

"Though the learned Sydney Montford's discovery is not yet perfected, we fully anticipate that he will return to us over the stars," commented another New York paper.

Another sheet, the *Scientific American*, however, spoke appreciatively of Montford's experiments, and warned people against jeering at him. History had taught that men whose aims had been declared absurd had often startled the world by their ultimate achievements.

Sydney Montford could not prevent the press photographers from snapshotting him as he boarded the *Flying Eagle* to take up his appointment at Untersberg.

CHAPTER TEN

"THERE'S the big strong man who goes about nursing dark designs. And those five clubs together mean that something evil may have happened already." With the sausage-like forefinger of her right hand pressed against her nose, Frau Wawerka looked up and fixed her little watery blue eyes on Crescentia.

"Then you think something may have happened already ?"

The old woman looked anxiously at the fortune-teller.

"Cut again," said the fortune-teller without answering. Slowly she arranged the cards side by side, row upon row. Then she shook her head gently, took a gulp of coffee from the cup standing near her, pushed yet another lump of sugar into her mouth, and leaned back in the big chair. "I can't see a sign of anything good in the cards. There's a letter from a long distance and, heavens ! there's another man with red hair, the knave of diamonds, with the ace of spades ! That's very bad ; dreadful. What do I see there ? The bread card is at someone else's !"

"*Jesus Marie und Josef !*" Crescentia wiped the tears from her double chin which projected beyond her face. *Jesus mein Gott !* Then the poor child, poor Loisi must be starving. She can't have got the cheese-cakes ! Can't you see from the cards if Loisi ate the cakes I sent ?"

"No, but I see something else here which I daren't tell you about."

"Oh, please, Frau Wawerka, don't leave me to imagine things. What is there so dreadful ?"

"I could do with another sip of coffee," Frau Wawerka said as she bent towards her listener, placed her mouth close to her ear, let her eyes wander timidly and searchingly round the room, stuck another lump of sugar in her mouth, and shot out one by one the words: "A child; a baby is on the way."

"Oh God, oh God! What a beast! And not ashamed of himself either. Poor girl; poor girl!"

"Don't tell anyone a word about it, because I can see here there's another woman going to bring you great trouble as well."

"I know who she is; that snake of a housekeeper of his!"

"Don't tell anyone about it or you'll never get out of the difficulty. That's the knave of clubs with the ace; you may get locked up if you do anything."

The fortune-teller had good reason for imposing silence so strictly upon her client. Her dubious calling had already brought her two fines, and if there were another case she was likely to be sent to prison.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

"YOU'LL have to forgive me, Herr Pfleiderer, for having to trouble you to come here; but duty is duty, and we have to listen to all charges."

Pfleiderer pricked up his ears. He at once thought of the stolen certificate of domicile.

"Information has reached us that you, Herr Pfleiderer, have abducted your ward, Aloisia Hacker, in order to conceal the consequences of your relations with a girl under age."

Despite Frau Wawerka's warning, Crescentia had not held her tongue. For days and nights she had racked her brain to discover a way of helping her poor dear Loisi, of freeing her from the claws of this monster of a guardian. Undeterred by fear of the unpleasant consequences with which the fortune-teller had threatened her, she had informed the police of Loisi Hacker's disappearance and accused Herr Pfleiderer of seducing and abducting her.

"He most likely killed the girl and her baby, too," the old woman sobbed, as she made her declaration before the police commissioner. The prolonged silence puzzled the commissioner. Could there be any truth in this accusation? It fitted with the theory of seduction. Pfleiderer might have sent the girl to the country or across the frontier so that the affair should not leak out. He did not believe that a crime had been committed.

"Now, Herr Pfleiderer, what have you to tell me?"

"Nothing, except that the whole story is too absurd to waste a word over."

"Then where is Aloisia Hacker now?"

"Abroad; she is studying."

"But that's no reason why you should refuse to tell her old housekeeper."

"Loisi won't have it."

The police official's eyes rested searchingly on the set features of the man sitting before him.

"But you can give me the address. I promise you I won't betray a word to Frau Crescentia."

Pfleiderer was just about to speak when he remembered the fraud with the certificates of domicile and birth, and he told himself that this would mean the end of Loisi's studies at the Technikum.

"No, Herr Kommissar, I can't even tell *you*. The girl wants to complete her studies without being disturbed by anyone at home. Surely you won't take any notice of such crazy accusations? People all over Graz have known me since I was a child."

"All I want to know is the young lady's address."

"I'm sorry, Herr Kommissar, but I can only repeat that I am not allowed to tell you. That silly goose, Crescentia, has always got her letters from her Loisi through me."

"Then why doesn't the young lady write to the old woman direct?"

"Because the postmark would show where Loisi is."

"Herr Pfleiderer, I'll give you till morning. Think the matter over. It may be very unpleasant for you if you go on refusing to tell me where your ward is."

"But what has any of it to do with the police?" Pfleiderer burst out, his patience exhausted.

"The police have to investigate when they are informed that a person has disappeared."

"Well, all right then, I'll think it over. Can I go now?"

The commissioner reflected. He could not arrest a harmless, generally respected citizen on mere suspicion. The information given by the housekeeper did not provide

sufficient grounds. He would summon old Crescentia again, and get her to bring the girl's letters with her.

Pfleiderer returned to his house deep in thought. It was an awkward business. If Crescentia did not drop her demands to learn Loisi's address, and the police insisted on his revealing where his ward was, the whole affair of the forged documents would come to light. It was not merely that proceedings would be taken against him; the girl's studies would also come to an inglorious end.

The whole day Pfleiderer distractedly paced his sitting-room. In the breast of his house jacket Herr Bindernagel sat, or rather hung, barking at Fräulein Mittermaier who was stalking up and down beside his master, rubbing against his trouser leg and comfortably purring whenever he stood still. This exasperated the terrier.

That evening the Herr Gemeinderat's supper was not appreciated, and the most toothsome bits went to Herr Bindernagel and Fräulein Mittermaier.

Frau Wurz was worried about her master's lack of appetite. She thought he must be ill, and suggested a doctor, camomile tea, and a poultice.

The excitement increased hourly, and the night express to Vienna carried an express letter to Untersberg in which Herr Pfleiderer called Loisi's attention to what was going on in Graz and told her to be careful, and in no case write to her guardian before he sent her a full account.

He spent a restless night disturbed by ugly dreams, in which a grim trial was followed by clanking chains and prison cells.

Pfleiderer, the respected landlord and councillor, was publicly sentenced in the great council hall, in the presence of a large crowd, to many years' imprisonment for theft, perjury, and fraud.

The conscience-tortured man awoke with a stifled cry to find himself bathed in sweat.

CHAPTER TWELVE

IN the Untersberg Technikum there was great excitement among the students. Two great events were imminent: the arrival of the American scholar Sydney Montford, and the great football match against the Mittweida Technikum.

Untersberg had been defeated in the last match. As a rule, only the senior years were admitted to the side, but this year Untersberg had made a special exception. The senior team had induced the college council to allow a member of the junior side—which consisted only of "greens"—to take part.

The one selected was Alois Hacker. Loisi, the model student who was not too popular owing to her readiness with her tongue and fists, had won a great reputation at games. At tennis she had carried off the college championship; she was first in the hundred yards, and as a forward she had won the applause of the whole college.

The only thing they had against her was her exclusiveness, for outside the hours of instruction either in lecture room or workshop, she held aloof from the social activities, musical evenings and excursions, in which the others took part. They also disliked her unremitting industry, and accused her of currying favour with the professors and superiors. They were very indignant, too, that Loisi should be the only student, and a "green" at that, who was not required to sleep in the common dormitories.

There were constant pinpricks at table, which Loisi met with complete indifference, assuming deafness or, if

they got too annoying, parrying so deftly as to bring the laughter to her side. No one now dared lay hands on her. She was credited with a titanic strength which in reality she was far from possessing. She was always afraid lest one of the students should begin a scuffle with her, seize her in a wrestler's grip, which would reveal her secret, her sex. So far no suspicion had been aroused. Often at football, in the close struggle round the ball, she had thrown herself into the fray and come into contact with other players, but in the heat of the battle no one had noticed Loisi's femininity. The only thing that betrayed her was her hips, so she had her jerseys made very full.

There were practice games three times a week. Loisi at these times did not need to diet herself to maintain her slender line. She ate little at table, but used to get the supervisor's wife to fry her huge steaks, and also ate large quantities of cakes and sweets. After all she was a girl.

Since it had been definitely settled that an English-speaking professor was to join the Technikum, she had been keenly studying this language and was far ahead of any of the others.

The Rector came in with Sydney Montford during a physics lesson and introduced the new lecturer to the class. The man's pale, thin face, the distant look in his eyes, his slight bent figure, betrayed the student. He did not impress his pupils favourably. They had imagined an athlete, one of those sports heroes from America so often portrayed in the illustrated papers with prominent muscles, firm chin, and the long arms of the pugilist.

Loisi, too, had formed a different mental picture of the American. This one looked like a scholar and certainly could never in his life have played games.

Herr Pfleiderer's express letter gave Loisi food for thought. What had happened at home? Why should

she no longer write to her guardian? Had the fraud in connection with the certificates been discovered? But these thoughts did not torment her for long. If there were danger ahead, the councillor would warn her in time.

From far and near people flocked to watch the game. Followers of football had arrived from Leipzig, Dresden, and all the small towns. Special trains were run from Berlin.

That eventful day brought Loisi two surprises. The first was a telegram from Pfleiderer, sent from Dresden, in which he announced his arrival in the late afternoon and told Loisi not to let anyone know, but to meet him without fail in the Konditorei Strauss at seven o'clock.

Loisi felt very uneasy. She could not understand this secrecy on her guardian's part. Then she impatiently shook off her anxieties. It could be nothing serious, she said, consoling herself. And the approaching struggle was giving her quite enough to think about.

She had her second surprise in the forenoon during a run round the ground to loosen her limbs. Montford stopped her, advised her to put on a sweater to protect her heated body, and asked her to follow him. Then in the pavilion he gave her several useful tips for the afternoon's match.

Loisi was very surprised at what he had to say. She realized that this haggard American was no mere bookworm, but knew a great deal about sport in general and football in particular. He must certainly have been a keen footballer in his student days. Loisi promised him that she would follow his advice.

Montford began his remarks in broken German. He said he had watched some of the trial games and had

noticed Loisi's good play, but had also noticed her mistakes.

"You can speak English with me, Professor," said Loisi. "I understand quite well."

He was very surprised, and his drawn face blushed.

Then on the ground he gave her a practical demonstration of what he meant. Loisi was delighted. Now she would help her side to victory. Her guardian's ominous telegram was forgotten.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE police commissioner had summoned Crescentia to his room in the early morning, telling her to bring Loisi's letters with her.

The old woman had already regretted her impetuosity. Another fortune-teller had told her, reading from a coffee cup, the exact opposite of what Frau Wawerka had read from the cards.

"There is nothing in the letters to show that things are not well with Fräulein Hacker. She makes no complaints, but rather seems to be very happy. I even see from this that she has a good appetite for cheese-cakes."

The coffee dregs were forgotten; the prophecies of the cards were regaining the upper hand.

"Yes, Herr Kommissar, but in that case why can't I be told where Loisi is? Surely it's very strange."

"She'll tell you all right in time."

"No, no, there's something fishy behind it. Herr Pfleiderer has been paying attentions to Loisi ever since she was fourteen. He was always wanting her to marry him, but she wouldn't hear of it."

"I'll have Herr Pfleiderer round again and tell him he must give us the address."

"Yes, I'd like you to do that; but I don't think he will. He's got something on his conscience. I've seen that already."

The councillor received a severe shock when during dinner Frau Wurz showed in a policeman. All the colour left his face and he could not take his frightened eyes off the man in uniform.

"The Herr Kommissar sends his compliments, and asks the Herr Gemeinderat to be good enough to go round and see him at nine o'clock in the morning."

Pfleiderer took a deep breath. He was still pale and was staring blankly at the policeman. At last he made an effort and stammered out:

"Very well, I'll come."

"That shook him up," said the policeman to Frau Wurz outside. "He's got something on his mind or he wouldn't have gone all white like that."

"A lot you know. The master has nothing to be afraid of."

But in her heart Frau Wurz too was oppressed by the thought that there was something queer about this business with Loisi. She was very worried.

Pfleiderer was still sitting staring in front of him, lost in thought. His hands trembled. Why, why, were the police sending for him again? Why didn't they believe him? They must have found fresh grounds for suspicion. Nothing could have been found out about the fraudulent documents. But if they were watching him they would examine his correspondence with Loisi, and then the whole fraud would come to light. One single thought now filled his mind: he must get out of Graz, and at once. Hastily pulling out his watch, he compared it with the clock, set Herr Bindernagel on the ground, and took from his desk three cheque books.

"Frau Wurz, I'll be back in an hour," he called from the corridor.

"*Jessas*, you haven't eaten any of your pudding."

Behind Herr Pfleiderer trotted Herr Bindernagel, unobserved by his master. At the corner of Wickenbergstrasse and Limburgstrasse, a young girl spoke to the man, whose thoughts were elsewhere.

"Look out, sir, there's the dog-catcher coming; your dog has no collar."

Startled, the councillor turned round, quickly picked up Herr Bindernagel, stuck him into the opening of his coat, and disappeared through the Jahngasse without having thanked the young lady for her service.

Loisi's guardian called at two banks and the town savings bank. At each he drew large sums of money. He told the managers, who knew him, that he was buying houses.

In the late afternoon Pfleiderer sent Frau Wurz to Bruck on the Mur to collect arrears of rent. He did everything as clumsily and conspicuously as was possible, not realizing that all these activities would testify against him.

"Then I shan't be back until late to-night, Herr Gemeinderat."

"It doesn't matter. There's an express at five; you'll have finished at Bruck by eight o'clock at the latest and then you can come back by the ten train. Take a taxi at the station to bring you home."

"Can't it wait till to-morrow? I've got the washing airing by the fire."

"No. The rents must be collected to-day."

The old woman went away shaking her head.

"The man's completely mad. What on earth can have come over him?"

At eight o'clock Resi, the maid, was sent by her master on an errand to Harmsdorf to see whether the decorations of the house at the corner of Münzgraben and Sandgasse were finished.

After dark Pfleiderer, with two suit-cases, slipped cautiously out of the house, and hurried by a roundabout way to the station, keeping a sharp look-out to avoid acquaintances. He took a platform ticket at an automatic

machine, walked on to the platform with his head lowered and his hat pulled down over his eyes, and in the waiting-room took a seat in a recess at the far end. Suddenly he started violently as he felt something scratching against his left leg, and he was greatly surprised to discover Herr Bindernagel standing on his hind legs by his master's knee.

"And now what am I to do with you? What a dog; running through the whole town after me! You might easily have got run over. What am I to do with you now?"

The terrier licked Pfleiderer's cheek and made vigorous efforts to get into the opening of his overcoat.

In the distance two fiery eyes appeared, and the Vienna-Trieste express ran into the station. Pfleiderer slipped unnoticed into an empty first-class compartment, where Herr Bindernagel was soon snoring softly at his master's breast. The long journey from the Third District to the station and all the traffic terrors in the busy streets had tired the little animal. The guard did not see the dog when Herr Pfleiderer took a ticket for Trieste and indicated with a good tip that he wanted to be alone.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

LOISI was being carried round the sports ground on the shoulders of her fellow-students.

The result was 9-1 in favour of the Untersberg side, and this victory was largely due to the extremely clever and dashing game played by Loisi, who had herself scored six of the goals.

All the jeers and hatred which had been directed against Loisi were forgotten; all other feelings were swamped in enthusiasm for this great success.

"Nazi," Fritz Hagedorn had shouted before the start of the game, "if you land us in the soup, God help you!"

Before the game had been going three minutes Loisi, exploiting the tips she had been given by Montford, outran the opposing centre-half, robbed him of the ball and, before the hustled Mittweidaers could do anything, had landed it in the net.

Tremendous cheering broke from the stands. It was Loisi's ovation.

Before half-time Untersberg had scored six goals to nil. Four stood to Loisi's credit. She laughed with delight at Montford's praise.

The students had made up their minds to celebrate the great victory that evening in the Aula, and were very disappointed when Loisi declined to join them, on the pretext that she was tired and meant to go to bed early. All efforts at persuasion were useless; she refused to change her mind. It was quite true that she was exhausted and she had still to meet her guardian.

Although the first year students were not allowed to go out without permission, Loisi slipped out after dark through the college grounds and met Herr Pfleiderer at the appointed place. Great was her alarm when she learned the reason for her guardian's flight from Graz. He, however, reassured her by telling her that nobody knew where she was, or guessed that she was passing herself off as a young man. He himself intended to grow a beard and moustache and remain abroad until Loisi had reached the end of her third year and could return home with him. His only anxiety was on account of Herr Bindernagel. The little dog might betray his identity; but he did not think there would really be a search for him.

When Loisi heard that her guardian had the dog with him, she asked to see it. Though the news had at first terrified her, she allowed Herr Pfleiderer's words to console her and promised to be careful. At Pfleiderer's suggestion she wrote two letters to Crescentia and one to Frau Wurz. He took charge of them, meaning to post one of them in Paris two days later, the other in Geneva, and the third in Milan, and afterwards to return to Germany. Then he would decide what further steps to take.

The councillor spoke no word to express his love for Loisi.

The reunion with Herr Bindernagel took place in front of the little hotel where Pfleiderer was staying. When the animal saw Loisi in her strange clothes, he refused to be taken on her arm, but when she whispered in his ear some of the endearments she had invented for him, he recognized her and convinced her of his affection. Herr Pfleiderer left during the night, and no one in Untersberg knew anything of his visit.

When it was known that Loisi had remained out until after midnight without permission she was "gated" for three days.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE news of the councillor's flight had the effect of a bomb. A warrant for his arrest was issued.

Through the indiscretion of a policeman the news reached the Press, which reported the case with heavy headlines, such as :

COUNCILLOR KARL PFLEIDERER WANTED
FOR SEDUCTION AND ABDUCTION OF HIS WARD.
LIBERTINE GUARDIAN.
COUNCILLOR PFLEIDERER RESPONSIBLE
FOR WARD'S DISAPPEARANCE.
WANTED BY POLICE.

The case attracted a great deal of attention in Graz. Many people sided with the culprit, while others—after all he had absconded !—could not find anything too bad to say of him.

Frau Wurz was subjected to hours of cross-examination, but nothing could be got out of her. She swore to her master's innocence, and repeated again and again that he had corresponded freely with the vanished girl and that Loisi had always written him very nice letters.

No trace of this correspondence could be found in the house. The fugitive had taken all the letters with him. In the police notices which were posted there was no mention of the fact that he had a little black terrier with him whose habit of hanging out its tongue might very soon have betrayed its master.

The whole affair remained shrouded in mystery.

Posters were broadcast describing the fugitive and his ward. The police of all countries took the case up and joined in the pursuit, but days, weeks, months passed, and still no trace was found of Aloisia Hacker.

A watch kept on the railways and ocean liners produced no result; public institutions too were combed; but still the pair remained undiscovered.

In Graz the matter was not allowed to rest. Loisi Hacker's letters from Paris, Geneva and Milan attracted much attention. The handwriting was identified by experts as that of the missing girl, and yet the efforts of the authorities in these three towns were unavailing.

Two facts had been suppressed by Frau Wurz: that the little terrier had vanished with Herr Pfleiderer, and that she had found on his bed a note in which was written:

"Don't worry, Frau Wurz; there isn't a word of truth in what that silly Crescentia says. If you don't hear from me for some time, don't get downhearted. See that the rents are paid promptly on the first of every month, and remain in my house until I come back. Don't say a word to anyone about this note."

Crescentia was sentenced to a fine of ten schillings for libel of Frau Wurz. After this case the two old women were reconciled, and Frau Wurz paid her old enemy's fine. They fretted together and were both deeply worried about the fate of their favourites.

There was another individual slinking about the house in a state of deep depression. This was the cat Fräulein Mittermaier. Mewing softly, he searched everywhere for his cheeky little playmate whose pranks had always been such a delight and who had won so sure a place in the cat's affections.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE first academical year was drawing to a close and everyone was getting ready for the holidays. Conversation turned solely upon examinations and the joys of summer. The majority of the students were going away to stay with their parents and relatives, and a few independent spirits were planning a trip to the far north. Those who were without means decided to remain in Untersberg, as the regulations of the establishment allowed them to do.

Loisi Hacker had intended to go to the North Sea, but finally decided to stay where she was and go on with the experiments she had recently begun. Also she was anxious not to be away supposing her guardian, from whom she had heard nothing for months, should come to Untersberg. On the occasion of his secret visit Herr Pfleiderer had left with Loisi a cheque book and authority to draw up to ten thousand marks, to save her from any financial difficulties in case he should be prevented from visiting her.

The professors, engineers, and workshop supervisors went away on holiday. Sydney Montford, however, remained. Every morning he shut himself up in the laboratory which the college had placed at his disposal, and as a rule nothing more was seen of him for the rest of the day. Frequently he would load a large box on his back and, dragging also a heavy suit-case, would disappear in the early morning in the direction of the Zeisser mountains.

With the exceptions of chemistry and mathematics,

Loisi had done well in her examinations. She had given most of her attention to physics, especially wireless telegraphy. One subject, which only had a very small place in the curriculum of the college—meteorology—she was studying independently. She had been infected with Montford's idea. Whole nights she sat working, forgetting to turn out the light, and several times was found asleep in an arm-chair by her landlady.

Loisi had several times in the early morning seen Sydney Montford passing out with his load through the gate of the grounds, which was opposite her window. This aroused her curiosity. She decided to follow him and watch him at his experiments, for that must be what he was about.

Loisi was also making experiments of her own on the lines of Montford's idea, but her knowledge of wireless was limited; so far she had done little more than broach the subject.

She had given a negative reply to the Rector's question whether she was going home for the vacation, giving as her excuse a wish to explore the surroundings of Untersberg.

She made frequent attempts to follow Montford, but either she fell into a deep sleep at dawn, or else, after she had got up early, the American would fail to come.

The girl had a good deal of trouble with her landlord's daughter, Bella, who had come to stay for the holidays. This girl of sixteen had fallen in love with her father's lodger. She made the most of every opportunity to be near him, and was continually casting languishing glances and heaving heart-broken sighs.

Loisi had been glad to have a girl in the house. In the past she had never felt the need of a friend. All the schoolgirls of her own age had been so much less developed and had taken no interest in Loisi's activities.

Whenever there was a chance, Bella would slip into Loisi's room and watch the experiments. Then, at her request, the young student would explain something, and Bella would contrive to bring her head close to Loisi's cheek and with flushed face would make a show of listening attentively. But it was only pretence; the intricate explanations about ether currents and wireless interference did not interest her in the least; all she cared for was the delightful closeness of her beloved.

Loisi, friendly by nature and sensitive to this tenderness, quite forgot that she was playing the part of a male student and would sometimes lay her arm on, or even round Bella's shoulder in order to explain some piece of mechanism more closely.

Fellner, the workshop superintendent, did not approve of his daughter's frequent visits to the student, and strictly forbade her to continue them. Love, however, always finds a way. The father used to spend several hours a day in the country outside the college grounds, where he cultivated flowers and vegetables and kept a large family of rabbits which played about in a spacious area he had cemented and caged round.

Loisi awoke with a shock from her dreams of innocent girl friendship, when one day Bella threw herself upon her neck and burst into tears.

"Alois, I love you. You are my all. Come, dear, kiss me!"

Bella had read these words in a novel, but there they had been spoken by a young man to his sweetheart.

Loisi was horrified now that she realized the true explanation of Bella's attachment.

"But that's impossible!" she ejaculated. "I am myself a . . ."

In the nick of time she remembered, and swallowed the word "girl" which she was about to utter.

"You don't love me, Alois! Then I must die. Oh, how cruel you are."

That was how it ran in the novel.

Loisi thought hard. What should she say to the girl? Then an idea came to her.

"I do like you, but it won't do. I'm already engaged."

"Oh, God! Who to?"

"My guardian."

Bella looked up aghast.

Loisi saw what a blunder she had made and laughed in bewilderment.

"Oh, of course, I mean to his daughter."

"But you once told me he was a bachelor?"

"Yes, of course, but you see, Bella, he adopted her."

Bella looked at Loisi with tragic eyes.

"Kiss me; my life is empty now."

Loisi pressed her mouth gently on Bella's hot lips.

"But now you must be good, Fräulein Bella."

"Don't call me Fräulein."

"Be good, Bella, and don't cry."

"Good-bye, darling."

Outside in the sitting-room Bella threw her arms round old Hektor, who lay stretched with his four paws sprawling on the rep sofa.

"I must die; I must die, Hektor!" whimpered the unhappy lovesick girl.

She rose wearily, went to a little wall-cupboard which contained various kinds of household materials, medicines, salves, and bandages. She considered them a long time. That cough-mixture could not bring her death, and the phosphorous ointment would not be strong enough. At last she found something which seemed to suit her purpose: a tube of aspirin tablets, nearly full. Aunt Julia

had once said that such poison should be thrown out of the house.

Sitting at the table, Bella swallowed one tablet after another, washing each down with a sip of water. They tasted dreadful. All the time the suicide kept her eyes firmly fixed on the door of Loisi's room. Her lips whispered continuously:

"Good-bye, good-bye, my darling, good-bye!"

Death would not come, but Bella began to feel a discomfort, and then severe pains. Her stomach was rebelling, and Bella had to hurry away to find relief. She was met by her mother, who in terror bundled her sick child to bed and wanted to send for a doctor.

For three days the remains of the twelve aspirin tablets made their presence felt in Bella's inside. The parents knew nothing about their daughter's attempted suicide and thought it was only some temporary disorder. The mother seriously warned the girl not to eat so many sweets.

"If only you knew how bitter those sweets tasted!" the weary girl thought.

Her visits to Loisi became less frequent. She would gaze at her idol with melancholy eyes and console herself with sweets, whipped cream, and other dainties calculated to comfort a maiden's broken heart.

The last stroke of four a.m. from the college clock had not yet died away when Loisi, who had kept watch all night at her window, saw Sydney Montford cross the courtyard carrying his usual load. She hurriedly put on her hat, picked up her spiked walking-stick and a bag of chocolate, and followed the American.

She took precautions lest Montford should turn round and see her.

The pair went on for over an hour, through the woods

surrounding Untersberg and up the Bretzelberg. There, in a secluded clearing, Sydney Montford halted, set down the heavy box, and sat down on it.

It was a glorious July morning. All nature was alive. The forest was long awakened and the birds were busy singing and twittering. Goldfinches greeted one another above the clearing; woodpeckers hammered; jays in the tree-tops cried warning of the presence of dangerous bipeds; linnets poured out their tender songs; a pair of wood pigeons cooed lovingly; larks trilled high in the air; a cuckoo in search of a strange nest repeated its cry; yellowhammers and redstarts hailed the new day; and the golden oriole in its brilliant plumage watched over the band. High up in the firmament a pair of herons were winging their way towards the adjacent lake. From the distance came the muffled crack and echo of a gunshot. Rabbits stood up on their hind legs and at the sight of man dived into their burrows. A hedgehog crawled busily to its home carrying a struggling mouse in its jaws.

Loisi stood concealed behind a tree and stared at the clearing. She was eager to see what the professor was going to do.

Over the girl's head, on a withered pine-bough, a huge owl sat watching her with big wise eyes. A doe peered curiously between the trees at the figure in the bright sports suit. It looked strange, so with a gentle push of her nose she urged her two kids deeper into the forest.

Dragon-flies, may-bugs, butterflies, and midges swarmed in the sunlight over the grass; bees sipped at the field flowers, collecting the sweet pollen needed for their honey; a belated fox came home from a raid, holding a hen in his teeth. Cautiously he slunk along a depression in the ground. He could hardly be seen.

Montford unpacked a large accumulator from the box;

set several batteries beside it; propped up near by a board bristling with armatures, switches, coils, and voltmeters; connected the batteries with the accumulator and switchboard, and took from his pocket a number of little objects whose purpose Loisi from her hiding-place could not distinguish. The American then pushed a switch over into its brass socket. A low hum became audible. Some kind of little electro-motor must be concealed in the suit-case.

Frightened by the noise, larks and partridges soared, and vanished over the trees.

Sydney Montford threw into the air the objects he was holding. They were metal, and glittered in the early morning sunshine. The professor watched them intently, and Loisi noticed his disappointment when, obeying the law of gravity, the earth's attraction, they fell to the ground at varying speed, according to their different weights.

Again and again the professor repeated his experiment, screwing up and adjusting his apparatus and switchboard. He met with no success.

Loisi could read his dejection in his face. She saw him take a large writing-pad from his breast pocket and begin to write, probably making calculations.

Unnoticed by Montford, Loisi slowly crossed the clearing. She was thinking hard, for the problem interested her tremendously. She had decided to offer the professor her modest help and ask him to allow her to help him in his experiment.

The American turned round startled when he heard the rustle of the grass. An expression of blank astonishment came over his face when he saw Loisi standing before him.

"What are you doing out here so early in the morning?"

"I tracked you, Herr Professor."

Montford was at first struck dumb by the frankness of her words, then in a sudden burst of rage, he rose from his seat and seized Loisi by the coat collar.

"Why do you come spying on me? What have my experiments got to do with you?"

"I am interested in them, Herr Professor."

She looked him fearlessly in the eyes.

"I don't want your interest, and I won't have you spying on me."

Loisi stepped back a pace as Montford released her jacket.

"You can't call it spying, Herr Professor. I am anxious to learn, and have been watching you."

He gave her a sidelong glance.

"You're on the wrong lines, Herr Professor, if you'll forgive my saying so. I was watching from the edge of the wood and felt sure nothing could be done that way." And she pointed to the apparatus lying on the grass.

The professor looked her up and down with an ironical expression.

"Can you by any chance show me the right way?"

"Perhaps. So far I don't know a great deal about the laws of physics, but I see you have already abandoned your theory that the law of gravity can be suspended without external influence."

The man's astonishment at these words from this pupil standing before him was considerable.

"Well, go on, do. Go on!"

"The moment you call in the help of electricity to hold up objects heavier than air there ceases to be any question of suspending the law of gravity, for that is an external influence which has nothing to do with the laws of nature."

"Where did you do your preliminary studies? If I'm

not mistaken, you've only just completed your first year in the college?"

"I haven't done any preliminary studies; I only learnt a little from my grandfather when he was alive."

On the way home Montford talked freely to his pupil. Yes, he had abandoned the idea of upsetting the laws of nature, and had taken up the idea of maintaining dead and living objects in space by means of low-tension electric currents.

"There's nothing new about this," said Montford. "But I'm anxious to develop the idea so as to make the post, railway, and other means of transport almost superfluous and enable objects of not too great weight to be sent through the air on electric waves."

"Will you let me help in your experiments?" Loisi asked.

Once more Montford looked at her face with a searching glance.

"Young man," he said, "get out into the country. Enjoy these lovely summer days; rest your mind and body so that you can begin the new year refreshed. Don't embitter your days of freedom, of youth. You look pale and haggard. Fresh air is what you need, not wearing yourself out in workshops or labs, poring over books."

"I'm quite fit, Herr Professor."

"So far. I was fit too at your age, but now I'm a sick man. My lungs are ruined and my heart too weak to do its work much longer."

"I'm very very healthy, Herr Professor; and I think you're exaggerating your own condition."

He did not pursue the subject any further. They returned to the college in silence.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

WHETHER he comes from Vienna, Graz, Lenz, or some quite insignificant place, the Austrian is always consumed by a longing for his home; and if in addition he is a confirmed stay-at-home who has seldom been outside Austria, nostalgia tears at his vitals, and leaves him ill and melancholy.

Herr Pfleiderer lingered in Nice and was bored to death. He had wandered aimlessly about Germany for months, never feeling secure, seeing in everyone he met a detective who seemed to recognize him and be about to arrest him. His single consolation was Herr Bindernagel. The little dog followed his master's every step, never left his side. As Pfleiderer lived in constant terror of being discovered, he talked with no one, save in these *tête-à-têtes* with the terrier.

Anyone who doubts that Herr Bindernagel understood his master is making a mistake. He did not understand all, perhaps, but he understood a great deal.

When Pfleiderer awoke in the early morning, Herr Bindernagel would creep up from the foot of the bed, stretch, push his little head under his master's chin, rub himself caressingly against his throat, and half an hour later would share his breakfast.

Herr Bindernagel had a great weakness for the white of hard-boiled eggs, and good milk coffee and buttered rolls completed the meal.

The terrier's accomplishments fell short of human speech, and this was as well. Had he been in possession

of this human weakness he would certainly have made no secret of what he thought of the people of Graz.

As Pfleiderer wished to avoid conversation with anyone, lest he should make a mistake and give himself away, but was not taciturn by nature, he appeased his desire for talk in dialogues with his dog.

During this year of constant association with his master, the little animal had learnt much of human distress and human weakness, and he even managed to reply to Herr Pfleiderer in his own way and console him. He would express his grief in almost human whimpers, barking only for joy and when he wanted to play. He did not appear to miss Fräulein Mittermaier, for he found plenty of distraction on his frequent outings. Only when from the distance he caught sight of a grey cat sitting in front of a shop, would he stand still, his memory working. At first he suffered bitter disappointments from these strange apparitions, for in his delight at reunion with what he took to be Fräulein Mittermaier he would venture too close to the strange cats and was rewarded with more than one painful scratch.

In time Herr Bindernagel became more cautious, gave all cats a wide berth, and confined his attentions to his own species. He made friends with all the dogs he met in the streets. He was not fastidious, and did not inquire whether his new acquaintance was of unblemished pedigree or the offspring of some chance meeting in the streets. He was impudent and tried to drive off all rivals, however big, with furious barking; but several times he had to learn that bluff is not always the right way in life to make an impression or conquer the field. But after all, the dwarf terrier's happiest hours were those he spent alone with his master.

Pfleiderer was suffering agonies of home-sickness. He

missed Graz, the Schlossberg, the well-known places, the table he shared with his intimates in the Hotel Zur Post, the skittle evenings, the comforts of his home, and Frau Wurz's good cooking. Though the Riviera was beautiful, the sun much warmer; though he saw before him the snow-covered peaks of the Alps as he walked down the Boulevard Carnot from his rooms on the Montboron, all this did not compensate him for the air of Graz. The soil on which he was born, the scenes of his childhood and youth which he had never been away from for more than two or three weeks at a time could not be replaced by the most beautiful of exotic landscapes. He was constantly opening his heart to Herr Bindernagel, who would listen understandingly, raise his head, give answering whines, and finally prance about comically, fetch a little ball from under the bed, and entice his master to play with him. If the ball rolled under the cupboard, Herr Bindernagel would begin barking vigorously and would not be satisfied until Pfleiderer got down on his knees and poked the ball out with his stick.

When the lonely councillor sat sunk in gloomy thought, the dog would jump on the old satin-covered sofa, stand in front of the big white Teddy bear which his master had bought him to play with, and look him fixedly in his coal black eyes, which were really shoe buttons.

The bear's fixed gaze irritated Herr Bindernagel, and after, as he thought, staring the animal into a trance, he would begin a wrestling match with his hypnotized victim, who was worthy of a better fate. If in the heat of battle he happened to tread on the Teddy's chest, the latter would emit a low growl which roused Herr Bindernagel to fresh fury.

The Graz police had not abandoned their search for Pfleiderer. The posters offering a reward were still displayed.

The council had declared that the fugitive had forfeited his seat, and the various welfare and social organizations had struck his name off their rolls.

Herr Kirchner shouted angrily at his wife whenever she mentioned little Karl's godfather.

Thousands of unfavourable stories were current about Pfleiderer, the libertine, and with the exception of Frau Wurz and Fräulein Mittermaier, the shorthand-typist, no one had a good word for him.

Gradually interest in the case began to wane and people only remembered the story when they passed the house of the ex-councillor or that of his "victim".

Wherever Herr Pfleiderer stayed he would take furtive steps, for he did not want to arouse suspicion, to get possession of a Graz newspaper. This was not easy. There was no demand abroad for these important sheets. He followed eagerly all that went on in his native town and in time grew more easy in his mind when no further news concerning him appeared in print. He had also ceased to be anxious lest he should be recognized. The heavy moustache and beard entirely altered his appearance, and he had grown very lean. He could not endure to remain long indoors, and the daily hours of walking with Herr Bindernagel reduced his heavy corporation, double chin, and thick red neck.

One day, as he was getting into the electric tram in Villefranche, he almost collided with an old school-fellow. The latter apologized in bad French but did not recognize Pfleiderer.

He had one further encounter, or rather Herr Bindernagel had, with acquaintances from Graz. The saddler, Göbel, with his family, sat down near the hired chair in which Pfleiderer was resting on the Promenade des Anglais at Nice, while Herr Bindernagel, seated on the hot stones,

was reviewing the international society which paraded past him. Göbel caught sight of the dog and said to his wife: "Look, Hanni, that dog hangs his tongue out just like Pfleiderer's used to do."

The time dragged along. Herr Bindernagel could not understand what was happening. There were even occasions when his master forgot to feed him, and only loud barking and scratching would bring the distracted man to his senses.

It was like this again to-day. The sky was overcast, the day dreary.

Pfleiderer sat over his lunch with a gloomy look in his eyes. Through the open door of the balcony he could see down the Montboron to the turbulent sea. Below, against the hotel grounds, the waves broke into white foam, throwing up showers of spray; far out a homebound steamer laboured.

Absentmindedly, Pfleiderer steeped his roll in the aromatic coffee, while Herr Bindernagel waited impatiently for his share. When his master swallowed bite after bite without giving a thought to his hungry little friend, the dog stretched out his neck and drew attention to himself with low barks.

"Yes, yes, old man; there will be something for you; your master had quite forgotten you."

The terrier raised his head and whimpered in reply.

"That's all right, Herr Bindernagel, I quite understand."

Louder came the whimpering from the dog's throat; he looked up at his master dotingly and sadly.

"Woo! Woo! Woo!" said Herr Bindernagel stretching his neck a few more inches.

"You're quite right; scold me; it's what I deserve." He stretched his hand towards the bell-push. Then there came a knock on the door, and he called out "Come in!"

A young girl appeared in the doorway.

"Yvonne," Herr Pfleiderer began in what purported to be French, "Yvonne, it's November now; I suppose we shall get a lot of rain here?"

"*Oui, Monsieur.*"

"Then please tell Madame Mercier I shall be leaving shortly."

"*Oui, Monsieur.*"

On the way to the town, Pfleiderer thought strenuously. The sight of the steamer that morning had set him thinking of travel. In a few days he would set out and try to regain control of his gloomy thoughts. After a little reflection, he booked at the office of the American Express Company, two rooms with bath in the *Mauretania*, which was sailing shortly from Villefranche. As he was about to leave the office, he saw over one of the desks a brass plate labelled "Mail Department".

The following day the *Mauretania* sailed from Villefranche for Alexandria.

Pfleiderer had assumed with certainty that he would not meet anyone who knew him on board the great liner and his assumption was justified. He travelled this time under the name of Kramer, and no one in the ship disturbed him. He took his meals in his cabin and ignored the other passengers. In the secretarial bureau he dictated to the stenographer a letter to Loisi. He did not sign it.

Dear Child,

I can get no peace and can't go on any longer kicking my heels here without a line of news from you. Just write and tell me how you are and how far you have got with your studies. Up to now I am keeping pretty well, but I am dreadfully homesick.

Don't allow your studies to be disturbed; I shan't return to Graz until you go home. I enclose my address.

In Alexandria Pfleiderer had an envelope addressed in the hotel office; then he went to the American Express Company, where he cut the firm's title and address from a sheet of notepaper, and wrote over it *Franz Kramer, c/o——*

He was sure that no one would look for the missing girl in a technical college. No one in Graz, not even the keen-nosed criminal police, could possibly hit upon the idea that Aloisia had become Alois, the girl a young male student.

Three weeks later, in the mail office of the American Express Company at Nice, a letter was handed to Pfleiderer addressed to Herr Franz Kramer. He looked cautiously round the room. No one was taking any notice of him. He put the letter in his pocket, walked down to the beach, and there sat down on the stones. Above him on the promenade the first Riviera visitors were strolling. There was no one immediately near him. Before he opened the letter, he assured himself that it had been posted in Untersberg. He gave Herr Bindernagel the envelope to smell. The dog sniffed for a long time at the paper. His quick nose ran from corner to corner, sniffing hard, particularly at the stamp. For a certainty Loisi had touched it with her lips or tongue. The sensitive nose recognized, even all this time after, the dear friend who had so often played with him.

"From Loisi," whispered Pfleiderer in the eager animal's ear.

Cocking his little head on one side, the dog looked wide-eyed at his master. He knew the name well. Now the fragrance of his friend came to him from the distance.

"Woof!" said Herr Bindernagel softly and wagged the whole of his hindquarters.

Pfleiderer folded the sheet. He was relieved with regard to Loisi. She wrote to him that everything was going well and that nobody had even the slightest suspicion. She was satisfied with her studies, and hoped to release her poor guardian from his dreadful situation before the end of the third year, and then return with him to Graz. She sent him a kiss and one for Herr Bindernagel. She had not yet lost her heart, but the girls of Untersberg were pestering her a good deal and were always making eyes.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

TWO distant male cousins and one female cousin made application to the Graz authorities for the presumption of death of their relative Loisi Hacker.

The missing girl's fortune amounted to well over half a million schillings, and the bereaved relatives did not intend that the money should slip through their fingers.

Nearly two years had passed since Loisi's disappearance, and no trace had been discovered either of her or of her seducer, or murderer, Pfleiderer.

The ex-councillor's relatives also made efforts to get possession of his fortune. This the courts refused.

By law, presumption of death could only be granted after a lapse of ten years. If, however, the corpse of one or the other should be found, or proof given of the death of the missing person, probate could be allowed.

A sensational discovery caused great excitement in the minds of the Grazers in general, and in particular of the rapacious heirs.

At Kapsenberg the corpse of a young woman, which must have been in the river a long time, was fished out of the Mur near the sawmills' wharf. Its condition did not admit of its being identified. Nor was it possible to establish with certainty whether death was due to suicide or murder.

The authorities investigated the case, and attempts were, of course, made to discover whether the body was that of the missing Aloisia Hacker.

Old Crescentia was summoned and taken to the mortuary

to view the unrecognizably wasted body of the drowned woman.

"She had hair like that, cut like a boy's, but that one is much smaller than Loisi."

"But you said in your other statement that Aloisia Hacker had a dark brown mole on the left side of her back in the region of the kidneys."

"Yes, that's right. I've dressed her since she was a baby. I used to give her her bath."

The caretaker turned the body round at the policeman's request.

In the neighbourhood of the left kidney gaped a large wound such as might have been inflicted with a broad chisel.

Crescentia had to be carried out of the mortuary unconscious. When she came to herself again, she said with twitching lips:

"Just there, where that awful wound is, was where she had the mole."

Whether this was Loisi Hacker, whether the hideous wound in the back had been inflicted by human hand or by the ironwork of the wharf, could not be determined. The body had been in the water too long.

Loisi's relatives were ready to swear that the drowned woman was the missing girl. They renewed their applications that Aloisia Hacker should be presumed dead, but all they succeeded in obtaining was an inventory of all valuables in the girl's house and at the bank.

With lips pressed tight together, Crescentia followed these pryers, as they went from room to room making a list of everything and taking every care that nothing should be overlooked.

"You're not to touch anything," the old housekeeper

cried angrily whenever their greedy hands were laid on any of the property.

"Don't touch; the judge only gave you permission to look at the things!"

The next time the inquisitive heirs tried to enter the house she drove them away with a broom.

The police were more and more inclining to the view that the drowned woman was Loisi Hacker. The criminal department busied themselves afresh with the search for Herr Pfleiderer.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

FELLNER looked in perplexity from the hat he was twirling between his fingers, to the Rector.

"Speak out, Herr Fellner; you must know. We can't have students spending the night outside the college and going to sleep during working hours."

"I'm sorry, Herr Rektor, but I promised Hacker to say nothing about it."

"Oh, so you encourage these immoral tendencies in a boy of sixteen? You, who have been an educator of young people for over twenty years."

"I should like to mention again that I know where Hacker spends his late evenings. There is nothing immoral in it, sir."

"If you persist in your refusal to speak, I shall be compelled to refer the matter to the council. You realize what the consequences of that might be for you."

Fellner reflected. Continued silence might cost him his post. After all, his word given to a young man was no reason for plunging himself into serious difficulties.

"You'll be surprised, sir." He hesitated to speak further. "There's sure to be a girl behind it."

"No, Herr Rektor. Hacker has rented a little workshop at Herman the locksmith's, in the Berggasse, and he's carrying on experiments there."

The expression with which the head of the college looked at the workshop supervisor standing before him was almost stupid.

"And do you know definitely that it is experiments he

is engaged on there; that he is not using the place to meet young women? He looks very washed out."

"Quite certain, Herr Rektor. The place is fitted with an electro-motor, a lathe, a new combined filing and boring machine, a big bench with different sized vices, a splendid collection of delicate instruments, and rows of scientific books of every possible kind; it's not at all the sort of place for meeting young women in."

"Then what is he up to there?"

"He is working on an important idea. What it is he won't say; he won't even let me in."

"Then how do you know what there is inside?"

"I helped to fit the workshop up."

"Hm!" The Rector reflected. "But is he really working there? Isn't the whole thing a pretext for spending his nights in undesirable company?"

"He's working all right, sir. I've often been to the Berggasse late in the afternoon and heard the noise of machinery and filing, and other noises we know in the workshops. To make sure it was really Hacker working there, I knocked at the door. He opened it, but always only just a little. He was always in blue overalls, with dirty hands and face."

"Yes, but what is it he's doing?"

"You can't get that out of him. Sometimes he works in his room and then he locks himself in."

That afternoon Loisi stood before the Rector. She already knew what was afoot for, in spite of the Rector's orders that he should say nothing, the workshop supervisor had given her a hint.

"It has been reported to me that you spend many of your nights outside the college. Where are you at these times?"

"In my workshop in the Berggasse."

"The college provides spacious workshops with ample scope to satisfy your thirst for knowledge."

"I'm engaged on experiments, Herr Rektor, and I must be alone."

"That is against the regulations. You must give up this workshop at once."

"I can't do that, Herr Rektor."

"In that case the college council cannot permit you to remain any longer in this college."

"There is nothing in the rules of the college, Herr Rektor, forbidding a student to use his spare time to perfect his knowledge."

"You're neglecting your studies."

"I'm certainly not doing that, Herr Rektor. The professors can testify to that."

The Rector found himself in a dilemma. The regulations laid down that students of the first year must spend their evenings in the college. Students of the second year, however, could go out any evening provided that they were in their dormitories by eleven o'clock punctually. This youth was spending his time outside the institution to perfect himself. If he remained away during the permitted time for this object, what could be done?

"Be ready to call for me to-day at five o'clock. I want to inspect your workshop and find out about these experiments."

"I'm sorry, Herr Rektor, but I cannot allow anyone inside my workshop."

The old gentleman drew himself up.

"How dare you talk to me in that tone?"

"Herr Rektor, I'm working on a big invention, and no one shall see inside my workshop until it's complete. I'd rather leave the college."

"I'll discuss the matter with your guardian."

"My guardian is on a tour round the world. You will remember I gave you the stamp with the Alexandria post-mark when the clerk asked me for it."

"So I am not allowed to see your workshop ?"

"I'm afraid not, Herr Rektor ; I must ask you to forgive me."

"All right. You may go. I will let you know later."

Loisi cut her lesson. She hurried to the Berggasse, told Herman the locksmith to have iron bars with special padlocks fitted to the doors and windows of her workshop, and asked him to refuse admittance to no matter whom.

The old locksmith nodded. He did not think much of this young man's experiments, but he liked him and approved of Hacker's industry and enthusiasm. As an old bench-worker, he had no great opinion of the college curriculum and liked to see this young man learning things for himself. Of course nothing could be learned properly in the college.

"Just let them try," said Herman, showing his fists. "Don't you worry, young sir ; I'll soon show them the right about."

The college council spent a long time considering Hacker's case. The Rector's report aroused great indignation in these gentlemen. Their authority was being endangered.

Sydney Montford, however, defended Loisi, and Salfrank, the professor of engineering, also spoke against excessive severity.

The American repeatedly called the attention of the meeting to the student's great intelligence and inventive gifts.

"You know," he said in his crude Yankee German, "this young man is . . . is becoming a great and clever man ;

he knows what he's doing. Let us leave him alone so long as he doesn't get into mischief."

"And I, too, gentlemen, propose that we leave Alois Hacker in peace. I've had plenty of time these last two years to watch the young man. He has an extraordinary talent for invention and an admirable desire to learn. I reported to you last year that Hacker had made an astounding invention connected with the American screws of our lathes, and contrived a machine which makes it possible to true wheels running out of the centre in from two to three minutes, a task which used to take half an hour. You know his improvements to our wireless apparatus, and you yourselves have praised his small but tremendously powerful accumulator."

"Force never does any good with young men like that; and besides we can't compel him to let us into a workshop outside the college," said the Rector in answer to a proposal in favour of compulsion.

The council decided that the student Alois Hacker should be told that he could no longer be allowed to remain out after eleven o'clock at night.

This order was in Loisi's own interest. She had often been spending whole nights in her workshop and then hurrying to the schools without going to bed. Her young body needed more rest; and moreover, she was a girl after all, and in spite of the games she played, not strong enough to stand the strain.

Montford had often tried to force his way into Loisi's workshop. He had long known what was going on, but had betrayed nothing.

"When I get some definite results, Herr Professor, you shall be the first to see them."

That was all he could get out of Loisi.

After her interview with the Rector, the young student

was firmly resolved to leave the Institute, should they try to compel her to give up her workshop.

Since that morning in the clearing on the Bretzelberg, when she had had an opportunity of watching Sydney Montford's unsuccessful experiments, her mind had been obsessed by the hope of developing the American's idea. She had begun her attempts in her workshop, rented for this very purpose, as neither in the workshop supervisor's house nor in the college workshops, was there any possibility of realizing her plans.

Loisi never lost courage. She had often worked for weeks and months on some point, after exhaustive preliminary calculations, only to find errors when she came to apply practically what she had perfected in theory. She would then sit for days before her machinery, accumulators, resistances, coils and the great transmitter she had made herself, searching for the error. New calculations were begun, all printed matter dealing with wireless telegraphy studied, and the complicated apparatus reconstructed. Every time she set herself to work again with fresh courage, never doubting that she would ultimately succeed in reaching her goal.

The greater part of the ten thousand marks which Loisi had received from her guardian was now spent. She must make an effort to get into touch with Pfleiderer and obtain more funds. His first letter, which had reached her a few weeks before, had been a great joy. She had eagerly answered at once, but in her delight had forgotten to ask her guardian for another five thousand marks with which to complete her invention and pay her fees for the third year. But supposing her guardian did not call again at the American Express Office for letters? He had only mentioned expecting one letter from her.

Herr Pfleiderer *must* call for letters again. Loisi deter-

mined to concentrate her whole will-power on this thought. She decided to send another letter, and then keep her guardian and Nice continuously in her mind, keep saying to herself: he *must* call for the letter! He *must* call for the letter! Her will would force him to obey and the remittance could not fail to arrive.

Loisi's idea was to be justified in part. Though Pfleiderer did not call again at the American Express Company for letters, he did awake one morning suddenly with the thought that Loisi was in great danger; of what nature was not clear.

The hour was still early. The sky was just turning to grey, and from the Carmelite convent high up on the Montboron, the clear bell was calling the pious sisters to Mass.

Herr Bindernagel did not approve of his master's early awakening. He was accustomed to spend the early morning hours in his protector's arms, stretching himself luxuriously, and then enjoying another doze. So an angry growl came from under the coverlet when Pfleiderer got up, dressed, and at once began to write a letter to Loisi. Throwing all caution to the winds, he wrote the address of the sender on the back of the envelope, *Franz Kramer, Nice, Montboron, Villa Mercier, Avenue Gustavin.*

Three days after the despatch of his letter, he received a telegram from Loisi saying laconically: *letter with American Express Company.*

Although the telegram bore no signature, Pfleiderer knew that it could come only from Loisi, for no one in Untersberg knew that he was living under an assumed name in Nice.

He went down to the town at once and called for Loisi's letter.

CHAPTER TWENTY

THE vacation had begun, and Loisi, sure in her premonition that her guardian would send the money, had rented the clearing on the Bretzelberg for a small sum, and had had it fenced in with a high paling. The locksmith, Herman, built a corrugated iron hut in the centre, and the inventress began to carry the finished apparatus from the workshop to the mountain and there set it up. All this was done with the sole help of Herman.

Loisi worked from twelve to fourteen hours a day, taking her meals with her, and sleeping in a camp bed which she put up at nights near the work-bench.

A week after the beginning of the vacation she had everything ready, and on the following day the new experiments were to begin.

Soon after this Pfleiderer, taking a circuitous route via Marseilles, Barcelona, Gibraltar, Lisbon, Vigo, Southampton, Antwerp and Stettin, arrived in Untersberg. He was greatly surprised to learn from Fellner, who offered to guide him to her, that Loisi was spending the holidays high up on the Bretzelberg.

It was not long before Loisi opened the wooden door of the enclosure.

"*Jessas!* Herr Pfleiderer! Thanks very much, Herr Fellner; you needn't send me anything to eat to-morrow. Good-bye. And there's Herr Bindernagel too! Oh, so you know me this time? That's splendid. Now don't bite my nose off to start with."

"Well, Loisi, my child, what's this I hear? You're staying up here all alone in this wilderness? Anything might happen to you in the night."

"What do you mean, Guardian?" She looked at him. "Heavens, you look awful! Are you ill?"

"No, only a bit homesick."

"It suits you rather being so slim. If it wasn't for that dreadful beard, you'd look quite like a young man."

He gave a pained smile.

"And you'd find it easy now to fall in love with me? Now, now, don't look so horrified, Loiserl; I've got over all that; you needn't worry any more."

Pfleiderer listened with great interest to his ward's explanations, and inspected with astonishment the complicated motors, armatures, switchboards, and all the rest of the apparatus. Although it was all completely strange to him, he realized at once that this girl had learned a very great deal.

"Heavy packages flying through the air all by themselves? Anywhere you want? Without anyone knowing that you are doing it?"

"You must look here. This is a television screen which I have improved and intend to make better still. Then perhaps I shall be able to see you going for a walk with Herr Bindernagel under the palms at Nice."

"I've read a lot about these things, but I didn't think anything of the sort really existed. How have you managed it all?"

She laughed.

"It's all the greatest fun. And once people learn that a girl has done it, they'll have more respect for the sex."

He merely shook his head.

"Look here, Guardian. I'll explain this little apparatus to you. Then you can take it with you and . . ." she

reflected a moment, ". . . in three or four months' time look out every evening between eight and nine—no, between seven and eight—you'll be an hour earlier there—and watch this indicator. When the finger begins to vibrate strongly, turn this screw with the white head until the pointer steadies and comes to a standstill at number 1,400; that's the wave-length. You see this sheet of ground glass here? By it there's a screw with a black head. Turn that until a light appears under the glass. It's most important that you should place the apparatus near an open window and let this flex hang outside. But the ends must never come into contact with metal. Then I'll write on the ground glass what I want to say to you, and you'll be able to see me in the polished glass above when you place this tube over it."

Her seriousness convinced him that she would be in a position to bring all these things about.

"But how are you going to do it all?"

"I haven't got as far as that yet, but it won't be long. Is there an open place somewhere in Nice, preferably on a hill, where there's no one about during the day?"

He reflected.

"Yes, on the Château. There aren't many people up there on weekdays. There's a refreshment room something like our country inns. Rough wooden tables and benches in front of a little house under shady trees."

"Is there a place clear of the trees; quite clear?"

"In front, where the stone steps lead down to the quay there's quite a large terrace."

"Send me a plan of Nice, Herr Pfleiderer, and mark the place with a red pencil. And make me a little sketch showing in pencil the place where there are no trees."

"What is all that for?"

"Listen carefully. If I send you a message by the

apparatus that on the open place—what's the name of the hill ?"

"*Le Château.*"

"If I say: be at the Château to-morrow at such and such a time in the morning, don't forget to do what I say, for at the time I tell you I shall send you a letter or package through the air."

Pfleiderer shook his head, completely mystified.

"You're not pulling my leg, Loisi ?"

"Do you think I'd dare ? I've been working at this day and night for a year."

"You look like it. You're working yourself to death. A young girl like you who ought to be going dancing and amusing yourself. You're spoiling your whole youth. You're nothing but skin and bone; and you've grown a lot too."

"Once I've managed all this I'll begin to look better. I can't help the growing."

His astonishment increased still further when Loisi went on with her explanations.

"And now I'll show you my wireless telephone. It's not yet quite complete. There have been wireless telephones for years, but with this little apparatus anyone, wherever he is, can talk to anyone else who has a similar apparatus. And for this I don't need any power-station or big transmission tower. I shall be able to make use of any wireless waves I need for my purpose."

She showed Pfleiderer an apparatus no larger than a letter-case. She opened the lid, and there lay a miniature loud-speaker, collapsible, beside a yellow perforated metal plate like a sieve.

"A man can carry this apparatus in his breast pocket, a lady in her vanity-bag. This fine platinum wire is connected to a metal button or clasp on the coat. It's the

aerial. A slight crackling noise inside the apparatus tells the wearer that he is being called up."

"It's scarcely believable."

"Please come with me and I'll show you my transmitting station."

Loisi stopped before a kind of cistern built of brick. She lifted the lid, and a tangle of wires mounted on porcelain insulators became visible. A stout metal wire ran down to the surface of the water, while another projected like a small lightning conductor above the edge of the cistern.

"I don't always need the air for my little experiments. I use water too, and I've had splendid successes with it already."

Pfleiderer was still lost in amazement.

"And all this . . . you've done it all alone ?"

"Herman the locksmith helped to set it up, but now I don't let anyone in, and I want to ask you not to say a word about it."

Two days later Pfleiderer left.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

THE Graz police had called in the aid of two of the best detectives in the Vienna criminal department. Emmerich Hungerl and Johann Breindl had cleared up some of the most intricate criminal cases, running the criminals to earth even when a pursuit round the whole globe was needed.

Crescentia, Frau Wurz, the friends and acquaintances of Pfleiderer, and all who could throw the least light on the movements of the fugitive and his victim were subjected to fresh examination, and the houses of the ex-councillor and Loisi were searched from roof to cellar. Nothing, however, absolutely nothing, was found which pointed to a crime, nor any hint as to whither Pfleiderer had gone.

The two detectives did not lose patience. Step by step they went on. They reconstructed the case from the day on which Pfleiderer had assumed the guardianship of Loisi down to the moment when the criminal and his victim disappeared.

The first question which the officers considered was: is this a question of a crime at all? What motives had Pfleiderer for the murder of his ward? Had there indeed been a murder? Any theory that the girl had been secretly spirited away could be dismissed at once. The guardian's whole previous life testified against it. The point to be kept in view was: that this ageing gentleman had fallen desperately in love with his ward. According to Crescentia's statement the girl had laughed at her guardian's

proposals of marriage. When the lovesick man realized that he would never be listened to, he might perhaps have used force and then murdered Loisi Hacker in fear of discovery. The deed might also have been perpetrated when the girl, on being attacked, had tried to cry for help.

But where had the murder taken place? The young lady had actually corresponded with the criminal months afterwards. The letters were available, and experts had declared that Loisi's handwriting was unmistakable. Moreover, the writing showed clearly that the letters had not been written in a state of excitement. They contained no complaint. It seemed out of the question that the letters should have been written under compulsion or months beforehand. Frau Wurz had taken them from the postman herself and swore that there were German stamps on the envelopes and that the address was in Loisi's handwriting. The postmark she had not noticed.

But why had the guardian disappeared when warrants for his arrest were issued? What had he to fear from the police? What reasons compelled him to remain in hiding? And why did no sign of life come from the vanished girl if she were still alive?

All these questions had to be answered.

The Graz police advertised a reward of 3,000 schillings for the solution of the riddle, and Loisi's relatives increased the sum to 5,000.

The officers worked hard and did not allow themselves to lose heart when they found themselves on false trails. They failed to obtain any tangible results.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

SYDNEY MONTFORD spent the vacation taking a cure. His weakened constitution had compelled him to do so. His lungs needed fresh air and his heart needed strength.

The doctors warned him that he could not any longer continue to shut himself up indoors, in laboratories and workshops.

The American made marked progress in a mountain resort in Switzerland, spending the whole day in the open air, sleeping at night with open windows, making long excursions in the mountains, and acquiring a tremendous appetite. He no longer ate his food heedlessly and hastily as he had done for years, but took trouble over the selection of the dishes and, in spite of his fanatical abstinence from alcohol, came to appreciate the healing effect of a good claret.

Nor did his brain now work so feverishly. He thought over his experiments with calm and deliberation. He often remembered the student Hacker, and made up his mind to give him more attention in future and help him in his work.

He had learned to appreciate Loisi's untiring enthusiasm, and he had to admit that the young man possessed great inventive talent.

Montford's astonishment was considerable on returning to Untersberg, to hear that Alois Hacker was not taking the third year course, but was experimenting in a workshop of his own on the Bretzelberg. He was even more

surprised when Loisi politely but definitely refused him admittance to her workshop.

"My dear Professor, don't be annoyed, but I haven't got far enough to be able to show you any results. As soon as I've got something definite, you shall be the first to come in."

"I must warn you not to overtax your strength. I speak from personal experience. Spare yourself. You are still growing and haven't the necessary powers of resistance. Who brings your meals? Where do you sleep? They tell me you've only got a corrugated iron hut there."

"Don't worry about me, sir; I can stick it for a bit yet. Up to quite a short time ago I used to sleep in a tent, but now I have put up a little portable hut with two rooms against the workshop and it's fitted out quite comfortably. Herman's maid brings me food in the evenings."

"Well, send for me if you want me. But remember what I've said."

"Thank you, Herr Professor."

Thoughtfully, Montford strode down the mountain. Was it to be granted to this young man to attain what he himself had striven for in vain for years? Perhaps. He decided to go to the mountain every day and see that the young man wanted for nothing.

Loisi, thoughtful also, walked to her hut. Montford's appearance had surprised her. He looked more robust now, more manly. His cheekbones no longer protruded so prominently under his eyes; his glance was clearer, his bearing more erect.

Had she done right in refusing his helping hand? Could not the American give her hints which would get her forward more quickly? No, it was better as it was. Now she stood on the verge of success, of victory. There were

only a few small obstacles to clear out of the way, and then she could astonish the world with her great invention. Everything must be kept secret, or else her further efforts would be prohibited and proceedings taken against her. For even now she had broken the law.

Loisi drew from her pocket a Berlin paper which had been brought up to her by the maid who carried her meals. On the third page of the supplement were heavy headlines announcing the supposed existence of a secret transmitting station, as three days before all broadcasting on various wave-lengths had been interfered with, and in some cases completely jammed. Investigations were being set on foot to discover where the station was.

Loisi grinned. A great deal had been achieved. Three weeks before, she had bought an old car with a powerful engine. She did not require the engine to drive the car, but had built it into sound-proof casing, and fed her dynamos with its power. The apparatus she had constructed and the new transmitter were functioning splendidly. They enabled her to use all wave-lengths for her own purposes and to interrupt outside transmissions completely.

With the big transmitter, which was capable of throwing light packages into the air, and holding them there, or projecting them over short distances, she had had endless difficulty. It was not the apparatus itself which had given her so much trouble; the difficult thing was to render the packages susceptible to wave influences. For months she had experimented, and always the objects hurled up by means of a catapult had fallen to earth.

When Loisi had watched Montford's attempt, it had been clear to her that the object thrown into the air must be fitted with a specially constructed receiver. She had studied wireless telegraphy from the first discovery of the

Hertzian waves up to the latest developments. The projection of an object fitted with large receiving apparatus was not a new thing. Many centuries before, the Nürnberg savant, Wirt, had invented a boat controllable from a distance, but it had not justified itself in practice. Aircraft engineers had built aeroplanes which could be controlled from the ground. Yet these things, owing to their suitability to the element in which they had to move, had been bound down to certain forms characteristic of water- and air-craft since the beginning of their existence.

Loisi's aim was to solve the phenomena, the mysteries of wireless transmission. Electricity in all its phases had been employed by man for years, but no one had fathomed its essential nature. Only when this had been done, the girl told herself, would men be in a position to achieve the impossible, the unattainable, the all; discover the true source of air and light in nature and place it at the service of mankind. The planets rushing through the cosmos would be placed within men's reach, and the result would be a complete revolution in all the conditions of life. Perhaps this research would bring about the millennium, eternal happiness.

Month after month Loisi was tormented by the riddles of wireless transmission, and she came to realize that her goal was only attainable if she set limits to it.

When Loisi realized that she must strike out on a different path if she were to lift even a little the cosmo-mystical veil from the phenomenon, she immediately put her new ideas into practice. In two days she had constructed a container of thin glass plates round a folded newspaper, fitted it with electrodes, a kind of small aerial of fine-spun platinum wire, insulated the opposite poles with vulcanite sheets, fastened a coil and magnet to the

inner side of the newspaper, and passed the connecting wires through small rubber tubes.

These experiments occupied only two days, during which constant improvements were made. Loisi had not had an hour's sleep.

To work the catapult, start the motors, and at the same time concentrate full attention on the complicated apparatus and the object soaring in the air, was almost too much for a single individual, but iron will-power and stubborn endurance achieved the impossible.

After more than a hundred failures, an inspiration came to her. Scrapping all her previous calculations, she worked continuously, without thought of sleep or food, from three o'clock in the afternoon till four in the morning at the transmitter and armature of the package, occasionally lighting a cigarette and drinking a cup of strong cold coffee to overcome her gnawing hunger and desire for sleep.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

OUTSIDE the morning greyed; solitary forest-dwellers were already greeting the young day; the dew drenched the grass and flowers; a light, cool early autumn breeze wafted over the tree tops; the leaves rustled mysteriously.

Pale and hollow-eyed, Loisi stepped out of her corrugated-iron hut. She went over to the catapult standing under its protecting roof beside the car. Carefully, Loisi fixed the package to the projector, the glass plates reflecting her drawn face. The greatest care was necessary, for if the tie-bolt struck too hard on the brake-block the glasses would be shattered. A small cube-shaped pad filled with sawdust was used to reduce the shock.

The engine was oiled, the magnets overhauled, fuel supplied, the copper brushes pushed against the dynamo, the tension wires of the transmitter drawn tight.

The bell of the Catholic church in Untersberg was ringing for the first Mass. The church clock struck five; the day drove the last clouds of night into the depths; the blue morning sky joyously hailed the sun, as Loisi started the motor, pushed the strap of the vacuum disc of small transmission to full power. The dynamo began to hum and blue sparks began to play round the brushes.

She pulled over switch after switch; a crackling came from the transmitter; the indicators of the voltmeters and ammeters began to dance, while the dial of the ohm register still showed no alteration.

Loisi let the mechanism run for quarter of an hour, fed

the accumulators with current, carefully watched the registration apparatus, jerked loose the bolts of the catapult. The package sped almost vertically through the air, and like lightning the girl inventor sprang to the transmitter, pulled over switches, twisted screws, all the time looking from the apparatus to the sky. Then she uttered a hoarse scream; her hands trembled; her eyes shone.

High in the air flew the package, turning in obedience to the Graz girl's oil-smeared hand.

The glass plates of the package hovering in the ether gleamed in the rising sun.

With the control between her fingers, Loisi steered the lifeless body through the air It was not built like an airship or balloon, to overcome certain laws of nature, but was a flat bundle of newspapers, weighing, with the glass plates and armatures, half a kilogram, yet it did not obey the law of gravity but was held suspended by an electric spell.

Loisi continued her experiments for quarter of an hour. The package obeyed her will through the control.

"You're to fall there, near the cistern," she ordered, pushing the lever over the porcelain plate upon which the whole field was engraved in miniature. Then she let the point of the indicator rest on the edge of a small circle, turned the large lever stopping the current over the metal knobs on to the porcelain insulator, and with great swiftness the package fell beside the cistern whither Loisi had guided it.

Stopping motor and dynamo, Loisi ran over the meadow and threw herself over the packet into the dew-drenched grass. Tears welled into her eyes, and she kissed the shattered glass plates, heedless of the splinters which cut her hands.

"Dear God!" she cried, "do not desert me. Let me complete what I have begun. Let me reach my goal."

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

LOISI had lain for almost twelve hours in a deep sleep. Nature had demanded her rights.

Hanni, the locksmith's servant girl who brought food to the Bretzelberg every evening, had a long time to wait before Loisi crossed the clearing and opened the enclosure door.

"Good gracious, how ill you look, Herr Hacker! Shall I fetch a doctor? Had I better send Herr Herman up?"

Loisi seized Hanni's head, drew it to her, and pressed two kisses on the astonished girl's lips.

"Oh, Herr Hacker!" Hanni stammered, astonished, embarrassed, and flattered. "I'm courting, you know!"

"Go on courting. Here are twenty marks. Buy yourself something nice. I'm so happy because I've had a great success. I'm not in love, but I'm tremendously happy. Come here, Hanni, and give me another couple of kisses."

"If you really want me to." She advanced blushing and offered her mouth.

Loisi hugged her. She would have kissed the old locksmith himself if he had been the first on the spot.

"Send Herr Herman up. And now go. I'm ravenous and I must warm the food up first."

"Can't I do it for you?"

The swain was forgotten. The kisses had set Hanni's heart aflame.

"No, no; you go, Hanni; to-morrow perhaps." Loisi had only just realized what she had done.

Crestfallen, yet happy, the girl went down the mountain. Over and over again she passed her hand over her lips and muttered:

"No, I'd never have thought the young gentleman could kiss like that. And what soft lips he has, just like a girl! To-morrow I'll put on the blue flowered frock that Eduard always says I look so nice in." She giggled to herself. "If only Eduard knew!"

Among the trees, in the very spot where Loisi had once watched Montford, the American was now standing. He had seen Loisi kissing the locksmith's pretty maid. "Well, well!" he muttered, "so he's pretending to experiment and carrying on with a common servant girl."

But had a handsome youth like this Alois Hacker any need to slink into solitude in order to indulge in love adventures? These he could have had just as well in Untersberg. Several of the senior students had their little lady friends down in the town. This was known to the governors and professors, but they could not do anything and pretended not to notice.

Montford slowly stepped up to the enclosure door. He had been interested in the youth for a long time and could not explain his interest to himself. As a rule he was not drawn towards his fellow men. He preferred his own company, and even in America had learned to shut himself in his shell when everybody jeered at his ideas. This Austrian student's thirst for knowledge, indomitable energy, and inflexible will, had attracted his attention that day on the football ground.

To-day he intended to find out what the student was doing up here. Moreover, the college hockey team had asked him to persuade Alois Hacker to play in the next match.

Loisi looked up in astonishment at the bell over her

workbench. Who could have come up in the darkness of the night? What could they want with her? She decided not to open, but the ringing went on. Taking her revolver and a pocket lamp out of the table drawer, she stepped out of the hut and strode over the enclosure, now ghostly in the moonlight.

Loisi had made a spy hole in the fence door. She shone her pocket-lamp through it, and was amazed to see the American professor. What did he want on the mountain at this late hour? She opened the door and stepped out.

"Good evening, Herr Professor. What brings you here so late?"

He saw the Browning in her hand.

"You do right to have a weapon to protect yourself with in this lonely spot."

Only then did Loisi realize that she had forgotten to hide the revolver.

"I'm not afraid; and no one would think of doing me any harm."

He looked at her sharply and thought: the lad doesn't look like a chaser of women. Could those kisses have been an innocent joke? After all, if he had had any evil designs on the girl he wouldn't have kissed her outside the door. What secrets was he guarding so closely in this hut in the clearing?

"How far have you got with your experiments, Hacker?"

Loisi's eyes lit up.

"I've managed the main part. I shall have it all settled very soon."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Oh, yes, Herr Professor!" She reflected a moment. Should she let him into the secret? Might he not appropriate her successes himself?

"Don't misunderstand me, sir. I'm not suspicious,

and I'm not afraid that you'll steal my invention; but all the same I want to get still further and solve the great problem which is worrying me. I mean I've already solved it, but it needs developing."

"I feel honoured by your confidence, but if you've finished your work, let me have a chance of admiring it. Perhaps I may be able to give you a useful hint or two. I should like to see for myself that your experiment has succeeded."

Once more she reflected. No. He should not see the apparatus, but he should have the proof.

"I'll convince you, Herr Professor. At six o'clock to-morrow morning be on the east side of the clearing, where you'll have the sun at your back. When you hear me whistle, look towards the centre of the clearing. Then, quarter of an hour later, I'll come to the door to receive your congratulations."

"I'll be where you say at six, and I shall be very happy to be able to congratulate you."

As she walked back over the clearing to her hut, Loisi examined her hand. How long he had held it clasped! How he had looked into her eyes! Could he have guessed her sex? She now remembered that during the whole conversation his eyes had been fixed upon her searchingly. In annoyance she cast the thought from her.

Loisi toiled in her workshop until long after midnight, and completed a new flight-package. Again and again her thoughts turned to the American, and as she lay in her camp bed, having set the alarum for five o'clock, she could not get Montford out of her mind.

"What an interesting person he is! Since he came back from Switzerland he looks almost handsome. What lovely dreamy eyes he has!" And with the words: "You silly Loisi, surely you're not in love?" she fell asleep.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

AT quarter to six the professor was already standing at the east side of the enclosure. He felt a burning anticipation of some extraordinary experience. An inward voice told him that he was to be the first witness of a great discovery. Although he fought against it, he could not help feeling that this young student had found a better solution to the problem upon which he, the professor, had been vainly spending years of his life, and because of which he had been laughed at by his countrymen and driven into exile.

After his return the previous evening, he had shut himself up in his own quarters and announced that he was not at home to any of the students. He felt ashamed of having been up the mountain and forgotten his real mission concerning Loisi's playing in the hockey match.

High above in the sky, some storks flew past, delayed by the warm autumn in the journey to Africa.

Montford followed the mysterious, red-legged birds with his eyes. When would man reach the stage of soaring into the air and propelling himself forward without the aid of aeroplane, balloon, or airship? He lowered his eyes, and his look fixed itself upon a small object which shot into the air, then rose more slowly, suddenly came to a standstill in space, seemed to fall quickly a few yards, then hovered free.

Tensely the professor followed the movements of this lifeless object which now hung over him, then with the swiftness of a bullet darted to the other end of the clearing,

now rising, now falling, now soaring so high that it became a mere point in the ether, and then again circling low over the clearing at tremendous speed, to hurtle down finally like a piece of lead and fall inside the enclosure.

Like a boy, Montford ran round the fence and hammered impatiently at the door, his heart thudding. He could not wait to see the young man, this young man who certainly did not know what he had achieved for the world, for mankind.

Montford threw both his arms round Loisi as she came out through the door, swept her to him, and kissed her on both cheeks.

"You genius!" he cried, forgetting that as a teacher he should choose his words and behave with more dignity: "Damn it! damn it all," he cried, "my boy, I had to kiss you, I couldn't help it."

With twitching lips, Loisi leant against the fence. The kisses burned like fire on her cheeks; she felt that she was going to faint.

He noticed her face turn pale; he seized her hand, and spoke softly and tenderly now:

"What did I tell you, Hacker; that's what comes of doing too much, overtaxing one's strength. But let me shake your hand, let me congratulate you, Alois Hacker; you're not only the greatest man of the century, you're surely the most wonderful being of all time."

"You're exaggerating, Herr Professor."

"Yes, but do you know what far-reaching consequences your discovery may have? Don't you realize that you are revolutionizing the world, the cosmos?"

"Come in, Professor, and have a look at my work!"

With shining eyes, Loisi explained the apparatus to Montford. He was overwhelmed with astonishment. What he saw here put Edison, Marconi, Tesla, and the

greatest inventors completely into the shade. What had taken other scientists a lifetime, this young man had achieved almost at once. It was the most marvellous thing that human brain could conceive.

"You mean to say you've done all this in these few months since the beginning of the vac? Made all this complicated apparatus and all the rest of it?"

"No, Herr Professor. I began work immediately after I watched your attempt last summer."

"It's incredible, all the same! You've done this in fifteen months, and here I've been muddling along for ten years with no result. It's beyond belief!"

"I owe the first impulse to you, Professor."

Again he took her hand and looked into her eyes. A deep blush rose to her face, and she lowered her glance. Furious at her own embarrassment, she pulled her fingers from his hands, and began to do something to the big transmitter, repeating to herself in the darkness only the five words: "Loisi, you're in love."

"Herr Professor, I've finished experimenting here. I'm counting on your silence, and for that reason I'm compelled to confide something to you which no one else must know."

"You can set your mind at rest. No one shall hear a word."

"Have you read about the jamming of wireless transmission during these last weeks?"

He merely nodded and smiled.

What lovely teeth he has, Loisi thought.

"You've guessed right. Those interruptions were caused by my apparatus."

"If you perfect the apparatus—which with your talents I have no doubt about—you'll be in a position to cripple the wireless transmission of the whole globe."

"I've no intention of doing that. In the first place I only want to use the waves of the big stations to convince the world, before it learns about my discovery and me, of the enormous importance of my apparatus, and in this I should be very glad of your co-operation, your valuable help."

"I'm entirely at your disposal."

"May I ask you then to keep an eye on my place up here from Friday evening until Monday? I want to go and rent a villa or cottage in Königswusterhausen."

"What do you propose to do there?"

"Make use of the most powerful transmitter in Germany."

Montford took a deep breath, realizing Loisi's scheme.

"And what if they catch you?"

"That's why I want your help. There," and she pointed to the cistern, "I have there the plans and figures in duplicate, in a sealed jam tin, and another copy hidden in the shed. I must find somewhere else to take them, and when I have I'll let you know. One of us two must always be with the apparatus. In case our hiding-place is discovered before I've finished my work, everything must be destroyed."

He stared at her. Who was this young man who wanted to wrench the world from its axis? What genius stood before him?

"In that case I should have to give up my teaching; but I can't do that. There's my agreement."

"Herr Professor," she said, looking at him sideways and smiling, "you're still very, very ill. A little breakdown. You can't carry on. The college council must grant you a little more leave."

His astonishment increased. He saw now that this

student realized his power over him. He tried to resist this suggestion.

"No, no, Hacker, that won't do. I can't have any humbug."

"Then you won't be able to help me with my further experiments ?"

"Oh, yes, yes, I will!" He considered a moment. "Count on me. I'll be here on Friday afternoon without fail. Then you'll be able to catch the evening train to Berlin."

Loisi stretched out her hand impulsively.

"Thank you, sir. And now I want to show you my television apparatus which knocks out all others of its kind up to now. It doesn't take up a hundredth part of the room of those already in use. It's small and handy and can be carried about and used by anybody."

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

HUNGERL, the detective, thought he had at last discovered a clue in the Pfleiderer-Hacker mystery. The innocent cause of this was the little terrier, Herr Bindernagel.

Control of dog licences at Graz was exercised by Herr Sauertopf, the dog-catcher and slaughterer. The lists of licensed dogs were delivered to him every year and he used his powers vigorously.

In the first year after the councillor's disappearance Frau Wurz had paid the licence for Herr Bindernagel, but had not collected the stamp. In the second year the thrifty housekeeper had not paid.

On looking through the list of licences, the dog-catcher's daughter discovered that no licence had been taken out for the dog of the absconded Pfleiderer and that the stamp for the previous year had not been taken up. This information she passed on to her father.

Herr Sauertopf considered that he still had a bone to pick with Pfleiderer. He was of quarrelsome temperament and, like all men of his kind, always ready for a row, and always implacable. According to a bye-law the body of every dog that died within the municipal area had to be handed over to Sauertopf. If a dog was sold outside the area, or if it moved away with its master, it was necessary to inform the licensing authority, which in its turn passed on the important information to the dog-catcher.

"Has notice been given that the dog has been sent away?" Sauertopf asked.

"No, father."

"Has the body been delivered to us ?"

"No, I've looked through all the lists."

"Oho ! Then I'll go off at once myself and have a word with the old skinflint. I'm only sorry the respected councillor isn't there. I'd have shown him !"

Frau Wurz was a simple woman quite unversed in the duplicity, malice, and craft of her fellow men. She fell into the slaughterer's trap.

"Then you say the dog's dead ?"

Frau Wurz's face crimsoned as she forced out the words :

"Yes, indeed, surely, over two years ago."

"Then why did you pay the tax last year ?"

The old woman began to stammer incoherently :

"Oh, I . . . I didn't think."

"Don't you know that all dead animals have to be handed over to me ?"

"No, no, I didn't know that." She looked anxiously at the relentless man before her.

"Then what did you do with the carcass ?" he asked her with a searching glance.

"Oh . . . oh, yes . . . what did I do with the dead body ? I buried it."

Fräulein Mittermaier was sitting on the window-ledge, and his eye never left the slaughterer. He remembered him well. That was the ruffian who had once, a long, long time ago, carried off his playmate, Herr Bindernagel, in a wagon. If only he could pay him out ! It was his fault too, beyond a doubt, that the little dog and his kind master, who had always played so nicely with them, did not come back. Oh, if only he had the strength of the big members of his tribe, the tiger or the leopard, how he would give it to this man people rightly named the hangman !

"So you buried the dog, eh? Where then, if I may make so bold?"

As though searching for help, the harassed woman's eyes turned from Sauertopf to Fräulein Mittermaier at the window.

"Out there in the garden, under the acacia."

"Then you'll have him dug out and hand him over at the yard, or else I'll take proceedings against you."

After a lapse of two months the dog-catcher remembered the matter, and when he learned that Frau Wurz had paid the fine imposed by the magistrate but had not delivered the dog's body, he took out a summons and had a notice put in the Press. People should learn what goings on there had been in the house of this murderer of girls, this fellow who had dared to meddle with the rights of Herr Sauertopf.

Hungerl read the press notice and, as an experienced detective, clutched at the slightest clue. He drove Frau Wurz into a corner, threatened her with the police court and long imprisonment, and in a space of fifteen minutes had wrung from the housekeeper the information that the little dog had disappeared at the same time as Herr Pfleiderer.

The detective calculated that the criminal, as Pfleiderer undoubtedly was in his eyes, had taken the dog with him.

"Mightn't he have killed the dog?" he asked with a glare.

The housekeeper broke out indignantly:

"And what do you think my master is? He was a good man, and he was so fond of Herr Bindernagel."

"And who is Herr Bindernagel?"

"Oh, that was the dog's name."

Hungerl knew what he wanted to know. In the history of capital crime there were many cases of brutal, bestial murderers having clung strangely to an animal they could not bear to part with and thus falling into the hands of the police.

The next move was to get an exact description, including any peculiar characteristics, of the dog and add this to the police notices about Pfleiderer. Herr Sauertopf readily gave the information.

"You shall know everything, officer, everything. You've only to ask." It did him good to play the councillor, who had once trodden on his toes, into the hands of the police.

"What did the dog look like? Had it any special peculiarities? Tell me all about it in detail."

"Yes, only too glad . . . only too glad . . . with the greatest of pleasure."

"I know already that it was a terrier. How big was it?"

"Oh, small; very very small."

"Colour?"

"Black with tan spots over the eyes. Its paws brown at the bottom, and the chin too." Sauertopf thought hard. "Oh, yes . . . I know . . . It used to hang its tongue out to the side, a long way."

"Which side?" Hungerl was thorough.

"Just wait a moment. Hm . . . that swine the councillor stood there holding it on his left arm. Ah, now I know. The tongue hung out to the left."

"But don't lots of these little dogs do that?"

"Yes, indeed. It comes of in-breeding. It's a sign of degeneration, a weakness of the collar-bone. Then when the teeth fall out too, which comes very young in

that breed and lots of others, the tongue has nothing to hold it in the snout."

The dog-catcher was proud of the chance to air his knowledge.

The telegraph of the Graz police headquarters worked all day and the wireless stations were asked to broadcast the information.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

BETWEEN the little river Notte and the Dahme, two kilometres from Königswusterhausen, the Villa Camilla lay in solitude away from all traffic. An ex-music-hall actress had fenced the spacious grounds years before and had the villa built in the middle, a two-story building with a tower at the corner.

The house had stood empty for several years and was now rented cheaply by Loisi. An old couple named Schneider, who acted as caretakers, lived in an ivy-grown cottage behind the park entrance near the narrow road, which was more like a field path. The old couple were glad to see the villa occupied again. The loneliness weighed upon these people whose rheumatic legs prevented their walking any distance. In the summer, stray excursionists might be seen wandering about, but in autumn and winter no one passed except an occasional farmer with a cart.

November set in with its icy winds, reminding people that the rigours of winter were not far distant.

Loisi and Montford had been working for four weeks in the tower of the villa. The apparatus had long since been mounted, and a motor connected with the lighting supply. A catapult stood concealed and protected on the terrace of the tower. The television apparatus was in position near the transmitter. The motor was well cased so that its hum should not betray them in the night.

Loisi had only once tuned in to the waves of the great station of Königswusterhausen, and blocked the transmission. This she had done merely to convince herself

that the apparatus was functioning. Meanwhile she was working, assisted by Montford, at the further development and perfection of her invention.

Even before leaving Untersberg, Loisi had received from Pfleiderer in St. Raphael a packet containing various plans of Nice and sketches of her guardian's house and the terrace of the Château. Only four words were written in one corner with pencil: "I am waiting, Kramer."

In the few weeks Loisi had been at Königswusterhausen, the invention had made great strides. Late this evening she intended to try whether she could tune in to the wireless waves, control them by means of her transmitter, and manage to guide a package through the ether at will.

Frau Schneider had cleared away the remains of supper.

"You can go to bed, Frau Schneider. We shan't want anything more to-day."

With a friendly good night, the old woman took herself off. Loisi locked all the doors of the house. Up in the tower room she tuned in the loud-speaker of the five-valve receiver. A speaker was just finishing in bawling tones a lecture on the tombs of the Pharaohs. A dreary programme with long strings of names was read out by the announcer.

"Halloh, halloh! We shall now give the wireless play: *The Lost Stocking*. The cast are . . . Halloh, halloh! A telephone message has just come in from police headquarters concerning the search for a wanted criminal. Rather more than two years ago there disappeared from Graz . . ." In a flash Loisi had switched off.

"Just a minute, Herr Hacker. That's quite interesting."

"Quick, Herr Professor, block that transmission. Set the machines going upstairs. Run up quickly!"

The American hurried out of the room, and immediately

Loisi switched on the loud-speaker again and was able to catch another short disconnected sentence:

". . . little dog is perhaps still with him. One special peculiarity of this animal is a hanging . . ."

The professor had jammed the transmission. Taking two or three steps at a time, Loisi rushed up to the tower.

"Let me come to the big apparatus, Herr Professor." Lever after lever, switch after switch were moved. Wireless transmission over nearly the whole of Europe was broken off.

Telephones started ringing in all transmitting-stations. Questions, complaints, nay even abuse poured in, but it made no difference.

At broadcasting headquarters in the Potsdamerstrasse the familiar figure of the controller, Blau, was running along the endless corridors, the long skirts of his white linen overall flying behind him. The general director had given him, *him*, innocent as he was of the whole affair, a severe wigging. Oh, it was enough to drive a man mad!

Even across the channel to England the interruption extended. There only fragments of the broadcast programmes could be caught. The interruption persisted, and all attempts on the part of wireless stations to resume broadcasting were useless.

Königswusterhausen sent out wave after wave, quite oblivious of the fact that high over the fields outside the district a small package enclosed in glass plates was hovering in the moonlight—that the disturbing wave lay so near the central station, and that this place was not only throwing all broadcasting out of action, but was actually using the muted waves for its own experiments.

That night Loisi wrote to her guardian. She had a foreboding of evil. By some chance the police must have found out that Herr Bindernagel was with Pfleiderer. The

little dog with the lolling tongue might easily give its master away; her guardian would not be safe for another hour. Her first impulse was to travel at once to Graz and clear up the whole affair. But then she reflected that if she travelled home now, she would not be able to realize the great idea which was hovering before her mind. And there was a further consideration. Loisi did not want to admit it, but it could not be dismissed or denied. She was in love, desperately in love with Montford. She fought against this passion. It was no use. If she went to Graz it would come out that she was masquerading as a man, and that she, a young girl of eighteen, was living alone in a solitary villa with her secret lover. Scandal would be unavoidable; it would be impossible to go on living with the professor, and beyond a doubt the American would despise her. He was very puritanically minded and hated all feminine eccentricities. Graz would be made impossible socially for ever. Nor could it remain a secret that she had slept for months on end in a dormitory which she had shared with twenty male students.

In the middle of her writing she paused. Would there be time the next morning but one to send her guardian a package through the air? Was it not, perhaps, already too late? she reflected. The first move was to get into wireless communication with her guardian. He would surely be setting his apparatus ready this evening and waiting for news of her. He would be eager to learn whether his ward's great discoveries were going to prove practicable.

All the following day Loisi paced nervously up and down. While Montford was working downstairs in the workshop, she tried to tune her wireless telephone into the waves travelling through the ether. No answer came, and indeed she told herself that it was not possible in the daytime,

that, following her instructions, her guardian would only be expecting a message from her at the arranged time.

Montford was very much astonished when Loisi asked him that evening to go to Berlin on his motor-cycle to fetch German and Austrian newspapers and try to find out what people were saying about the jamming of wireless transmission, which was still persisting; also what steps the police were contemplating.

Scarcely was Montford out of the house, scarcely had the roar of the departing motor died away, than Loisi ran to the tower-room, disconnected the transmitter which was causing the jamming, and waited for the resumption of the broadcast.

Ten minutes passed before the apparatus on the switchboard showed that the big transmitter of Königswusterhausen had begun to function again. Immediately, Loisi tuned in the television instrument, pulled in front of her the plan showing all the European wireless stations, and tried to reach her guardian in Nice. The wireless waves crossed one another in the ether; Loisi worked continuously, the keyboard of the radiograph apparatus within reach of her hand.

Loisi worked for well over an hour. Perspiration ran down her brow; her hands were icy cold.

In vain she tried to pick up the wave of the French Riviera station via Bern and Geneva. It was no use; atmospherics and interference of the electric waves were hampering her. Finally she switched on to Paris, and suddenly the little lamp in the television screen lit up. Another few minutes passed, and then Herr Pfleiderer's face appeared, clearly recognizable, in the circular sheet of glass.

Loisi gave a low cry: "Thank God!" She saw the

intent look in her guardian's eyes as he listened, saw Herr Bindernagel poking his head out of the opening of his master's jacket and peering curiously in front of him. He had certainly recognized her face on the screen of the little apparatus.

Hurriedly Loisi pressed the brass keys of the wireless radiograph:

"Are the words appearing before you on the ground glass screen? If so nod your head."

Pfleiderer's features relaxed. He seemed to be speaking eagerly. Herr Bindernagel raised his head to bark, and was silenced by his master. "Go back to Graz at once via Fiume and Budapest. You must arrive at night. Take Herr Bindernagel to Frau Wurz's. The police have found out that the dog is with you. He may easily betray you. You can reach Graz in two and a half days. The Budapest train arrives at two a.m. Pack the dog in a little basket so that no one sees him.

"At four a.m. a package for you will drop in the big field behind the Carmelite convent. Inside there will be a letter telling you all the rest. Keep hidden in your lodgings all the following day, and next night at two o'clock catch the Trieste train, which will take you to Vienna. From there go straight on to Berlin. I will be waiting for you the day after your arrival, at five o'clock, in the Atlantik Restaurant on the Kurfürstendamm. On no account shave off your beard. Have you been able to read all this?"

The image on the sheet of glass nodded.

"Have you got it all clear?"

Pfleiderer's head again nodded.

"Could you see me clearly?" Loisi wrote with the brass keys.

A smile passed over Pfleiderer's face. He moved his

mouth, and Herr Bindernagel looked as though he was barking.

"Will you do all this?"

Pfleiderer nodded and looked anxiously down, watching the screen.

"I have fallen in love," Loisi wrote. Then she threw a kiss to Pfleiderer's image and disconnected the apparatus.

She was relieved. The good angel who protected her and her guardian would go on helping. She was looking forward to their meeting. There were still five days to go.

The news and papers which Montford brought from Berlin were sensational in the extreme. The papers declared unanimously that this must be the same interference that had been noticed months before. The police were severely criticized. People could not understand why the delinquent should have remained undiscovered. The German wireless companies were offering a big reward for the seizure of the disturber, and Vienna, London, and the Swiss and French companies associated themselves with this action and were sending their most famous detectives to Germany.

The wireless technicians were indulging in the wildest speculations, but could not say where the centre of the disturbance was situated. The disturber must have a tremendously powerful apparatus, and might be anywhere in the German Reich. There was even some question whether the disturbance came from within Germany at all; whether it might not originate somewhere in Scandinavia or among the peaks of the Swiss mountains. It never entered anybody's head that the station was in the immediate vicinity of a main transmitting station. Such impudence was too improbable.

Loisi was overjoyed.

"If they don't find us, Herr Professor, I'll develop and extend my experiments before next summer so that what you said in Untersberg, when you first saw me try, will come true."

Carried away with enthusiasm, she stretched out her arms and cried:

"The world, the universe; I'll have it all at my command!"

The American looked in astonishment at the youth before him. Who was this young man? What mystery surrounded him? Was he from some other world? It almost seemed so, for one day he would surely control the whole world, have the cosmos at his feet.

During the two years which the youth had spent at the technical college, and the five months which had passed since he had left it, he had not once visited a theatre or any form of entertainment. Though in his first year at the college he had been interested in games, he had dropped this passion in his second year and lived for science alone. And in this short time he had succeeded in throwing the world out of gear.

Alois Hacker is a stiff problem to solve, Montford told himself. Let us thank God for sending us this Messiah.

"Herr Professor," Loisi's voice awoke him from his reflections. "Herr Professor, I should like to ask you to run through all the plans and figures again. We must have everything ready so that we can destroy all these machines and instruments in a moment of danger and prevent their falling into wrong hands before the time. Our first plans are well hidden on the Bretzelberg, and the new ones you have drawn up must be kept in some other safe place."

Montford laughed.

"We've changed parts, my friend. Now you're the master and I the pupil."

"You mustn't talk like that, Herr Professor. I've a lot to thank you for."

Loisi wrote another short letter during the night, and early the following morning she was standing at her work-bench, busy with two new packages. These must be lighter but stronger. They had a long journey before them, about the success of which Loisi had not a moment's doubt.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

"NON, *Monsieur, Monsieur Kramer est parti avant-hier.*" Madame Mercier shrugged her shoulders regretfully and spread out her arms.

Hungerl stood irresolute. So he had arrived too late. The old lady could not tell him where "Herr Kramer" had gone.

He had thought he had the bird in his hand, but once more it had eluded him.

When it became known that the little terrier was in his master's company, reports poured in from every quarter of Europe. People everywhere declared that they had seen the man with the little black dog; the lolling tongue was unmistakable.

Sometimes the man was small, heavy, and clean-shaven; sometimes tall, slim, and bearded. One letter describing him as fair was followed by another saying he was dark, while a third mentioned that the gentleman with the little dog was very bald.

The detective worked his way slowly through this mountain of letters and telegrams. As an old hand, he knew he could afford to overlook nothing. The only thing which angered him was the bad taste of those anonymous practical jokers who tried to be facetious at the expense of the police.

Hungerl had already foreseen the possibility of Pfleiderer having grown a beard. He had had a number of full-face photographs of the fugitive made by Sorger und Fleck, the photographers in the Hamerlinggasse. On these he

had touched in moustache and beard, moustache and side whiskers, moustache and goatee, respectively, and copies of these were posted by the police side by side with the original beardless portrait.

Meanwhile the most definite reports always came from the French Riviera, and in particular the statements of Göbel, the master-saddler, and his family convinced Hungerl that the wanted man must be quartered there. After two days in Nice, the detective traced Pfleiderer's lodging, but unfortunately he was too late.

Hungerl now felt sure that the wanted man had got rid of his ward, for everyone who had met him during the last two years with his dog (and it was only Herr Bindernagel's lolling tongue which had attracted their attention to the man), declared that they had never seen a girl in his company, but that the man (with the beard) was always accompanied only by his little dog.

Nor had Madame Mercier and the other people living in the house ever noticed a girl with Herr Pfleiderer.

That it *was* Herr Pfleiderer was beyond all doubt, for the old lady and her maid said that the dear, lively little dog had had a very difficult name to pronounce.

"*Son nom était très drôle.*"

"Bindernagel, wasn't it ?"

"*Oui, oui, monsieur.*"

Hungerl tried in vain to run Pfleiderer to earth. He searched the house in the Avenue Gustavin without finding any hiding-place to which the fugitive might have resorted.

He had inquiries made at all stations from Nice to Monte Carlo eastward and as far as Marseilles westward, as well as at all shipping lines and long-distance motor-bus services. The man with the dog had not been seen.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

NO one could have suspected that Pfleiderer, carrying a suitcase and a basket containing his little dog, had one morning boarded the regular mail motor-bus in the Place Massena and travelled to Coni, high up in the Italian Alps. From there he had hurried down into the valley on a pair of newly-acquired skis, with the dog basket strapped on his back, and at San Mauricio had caught the Pullman Express which took him that evening to Milan. He had left his luggage at Sazia's, the Nice forwarding firm, and taken only bare necessities in the small suitcase.

These were bad days for Herr Bindernagel. Only at night, when no one was near, did his master let him out of the basket. But the little dog behaved very well. He never called attention to himself, but lay quietly in his little prison, where indeed he even seemed to be very comfortable. In Milan he shared his master's bed and stretched itself luxuriously.

The following evening, Pfleiderer travelled with his little dog via Venice and Trieste to Graz. There was no connection via Budapest, as Loisi had told him there would be. In Postumia there was an opportunity of taking the dog unnoticed for a walk. Pfleiderer hid Herr Bindernagel under his overcoat and crossed the platform. No one took any notice of them.

The train ran into Graz station punctually at midnight. Now the greatest care would have to be taken.

The station was very busy. Behind a porter who was

carrying a large trunk on his shoulder, Pfleiderer passed the barrier and reached the street unobserved. Hurriedly he vanished into the darkness of the Finkengasse, passed quickly along the Niesenbergergasse, and an hour later reached the Third District by a roundabout way. He had already thought out how he would enter the house. There could be no question of rousing the porter. Although he had a latchkey with him, he did not dare enter his home through the front door. Someone might happen to come that way and see him. He walked round by the Lindweg, climbed over a low fence in the Grillparzerstrasse, crossed an empty building-plot, and cautiously opened the back garden gate.

Herr Bindernagel suddenly became restless in his basket. Did he scent his old home? He certainly knew in his dark prison that he was in Graz, the scene of those splendid times of long ago.

"Quiet!" whispered Pfleiderer. "We'll soon be up." Softly he opened the courtyard door, slipped quickly up the stairs, turned the key in the lock of the hall-door, and on tip-toe entered his flat, which he had not seen for three years.

"*Jesus Maria und Josef!*" Frau Wurz whimpered, with horror in her eyes, when the light suddenly went up in her bedroom and a strange bearded man strode hurriedly up to her.

"Be quiet, Frau Wurz. Not a sound; it's me." Just in time, before she could utter a cry, he laid his hand over her mouth. "Don't you recognize me?"

On the verge of fainting, the housekeeper sat up in bed. Her face was as white as the sheets. Her lips twitched.

"Yes, yes, the Herr Gemeinderat."

Herr Bindernagel was jumping about in his basket, for

Fräulein Mittermaier was rubbing himself against the wicker bars in front of the little window.

Pfleiderer opened the basket to let the dog out and prevent it from barking. With one leap, Herr Bindernagel was out, only to suffer a box on the ear from Fräulein Mittermaier. The cat was overjoyed and furious at the same time. His little friend must be punished for his long absence. The terrier was on the point of giving tongue, when Pfleiderer quickly seized him and threw him on to the bed of the terrified Frau Wurz. The dog forgot the blows he had just received, his delight at seeing the old woman again driving out all thoughts of revenge or pain. He behaved like a mad thing and could not be quieted.

"Don't talk now. I'll explain everything later. Make me a cup of coffee quickly, and give Herr Bindernagel something to eat."

"But Loisi, Herr Gemeinderat; didn't you kill her?"

"Frau Wurz, don't talk such nonsense. I shall have news of Loisi before the night is over."

"What! Is she in Graz too?"

"No, but to-night, or rather at five in the morning, she's sending me a little parcel."

"But there's no post at that time."

"She's sending it me through the air. But get up now, and I'll tell you everything later."

He strode quickly out of the room.

"*Maria und Josef*, the man's crazy! Sending him a parcel through the air! Heavens above; the poor gentleman has gone clean out of his mind!" Frau Wurz sobbed as she turned the handle of the coffee-mill which she was holding between her knees.

Pfleiderer was sitting in his room, where he had found everything as he had left it. As always, Frau Wurz had kept the place spotless.

Herr Bindernagel was rushing from room to room. He felt forced not merely to look, but to sniff at everything.

With scorn in his eyes at the childish behaviour of his playmate, Fräulein Mittermaier followed the prodigal's every step. He was just as glad to have his friend back, but controlled his emotions.

With an anxious look, Frau Wurz came into the room, carrying a tray. She poured out the steaming coffee into her master's cup with trembling hands.

"Why do you look at me in that funny way, Frau Wurz ? Your hands are shaking, and you're spilling the milk. Sit down and be sensible. There's nothing the matter with me, and in an hour or two I'll bring you a letter from Loisi, so there need be no more nonsense about murder."

The housekeeper slowly lowered herself into a chair.

"But the most important thing is, Frau Wurz, that no one must know I've been here. I've got to be away again to-morrow evening. And mind ; *you know nothing*. You just found Herr Bindernagel on the street, or by the front door ; or you can say he came back by himself. *I have not been here !* I shall have to be in hiding all day to-morrow. If anyone comes, I'll disappear somewhere."

"But where's Loisi ? Can't I be told ?"

"I don't know myself. I always hear from her through the air. You needn't look at me like that ; I'm quite sane. You know how Loisi has always been working hard at experiments as her grandfather used to do. Well, now she has made a wonderful discovery ; but no one, not a soul, must know anything, or it might be a bad business for her."

"Oh, Lord ! poor girl ! Can't I even tell Crescentia ? She's worrying herself to death."

"No, it'll take more than that to kill that old fool. She started the whole trouble."

Frau Wurz shook her head and took Herr Bindernagel on to her lap. He had been scratching at her dress.

"And now Herr Bindernagel is going to stay here?"

"Yes, but keep the little rascal in to-morrow evening so that he won't run after me as he did before. But I'll miss him; he's been my only consolation."

At half-past four in the morning, after Frau Wurz had looked to see that the coast was clear, Pfleiderer slunk out of the house.

It was bitterly cold, and frost already lay on the fields. Geidorf seemed dead. There was a light burning in the convent where the nuns were already up ready for early Mass.

Pfleiderer walked up the Hochsteingasse to the Rosenberg. There was not a soul in sight. At the Forsthaus he turned into the wood. A dog began to bark, but was soon quiet again. The lonely wanderer went on till he reached the clearing. He stood waiting among the trees. It was pitch dark, and dawn still seemed distant. Restless birds were twittering in their nests; a cock crowed; an engine shrieked; the convent clock struck five.

Breathlessly Pfleiderer watched, striving to pierce the darkness. The wind rustled the tops of the bare trees, and across the sky torn clouds hurried, parting at times to let through the moonlight. The light shone wanly on the rime-covered grass.

Suddenly an electric shock seemed to shoot through the waiting man. His teeth chattered audibly. A brief rending noise sounded in the air, and about fifty meters from Pfleiderer something fell, cracking and splintering on the hard ground.

"Father in Heaven! That genius, Loisi!"

Like a boy he ran over the clearing, sought for and found the package, tore it open, trod the splinters into the

ground, and ran down the hill as fast as his legs could carry him. Only when he reached the corner of the Lindweg and Körblergasse, did he slacken his pace.

The breath came whistling from his chest; his heart seemed on the point of bursting.

With fear in her heart, Frau Wurz had been watching all the time through the windows. Now she hurried to the front door and let Pfleiderer in. There was no one about.

"It's come, it's come, Frau Wurz!"

And exhausted he collapsed into a chair.

"Lawks, you're bleeding! Your hands are all red!" She drew back frightened. Was this a murderer?

"Oh, that's nothing. It was the glass round the packet. But stop shouting, and bring a basin of water for me to wash. I want to read the letter."

Pfleiderer's hand, bound in a handkerchief, drew the bloodstained package from his coat. He removed the glass which still adhered to it, laid wires and fragments of armature on the table, broke open the little carton, and pulled out the letter. The housekeeper watched his actions with staring eyes. A shudder shook her body.

"But it's true then! It's witchcraft; no good will come of it."

"Don't talk bosh. Get down on your knees and thank God that he has allowed us to see this miracle worked through Loisi. There, look at the writing; is that from Loisi or isn't it?"

"Yes, yes, it looks like it. Can I read the letter?"

"I'll see." He skimmed through the message.

"No. I can't let you read the letter, but you can set your mind at rest. It won't be long now before I'm back in Graz with Loisi."

"I'll believe anything, but just let me read a line."

The old woman read the sentence in which Loisi advised that Herr Bindernagel should be left in Graz. She was overcome with emotion.

"Now I'm satisfied, Herr Gemeinderat; now I'll be able to sleep again. No more of those awful dreams that they'd hanged you."

"Stop calling me *Herr Gemeinderat*. They've kicked me out."

"Yes, but if the Herr Gemeinderat comes back he's sure to be made Burgomaster of Graz or Sheriff of Styria."

"Not if I know it. I mean to enjoy a bit of peace after all this."

When the maidservant came down from her attic in the early morning, Frau Wurz sent her to Mürzzuschlag to collect the rent from Frau Glück, the proprietress of the Café Wien. This would take her all day and would prevent her seeing her master.

At noon, Graz was thrown into a state of intense excitement. In the middle of the sports ground by the swimming pool quay, a glistening object had come hurtling down from the clear sky and had shattered with a loud report.

The phenomenon had been observed from the Mur bank, from the Schlossberg and from the Kalvarie bridge. People came running up from all directions to the sports ground, where the caretaker, who had been busy with his work in the open, had lost the use of his limbs from shock.

"I've been shot at," he stammered as the people swarmed on to the ground.

A policeman who had seen the crowd rushing from the Wassergasse hurried to the scene.

In the middle of the wide open space, people were standing round the caretaker, who was staring vacantly

from the package in his hand to the people standing round, and then at the little crater which had been formed in the ground.

"That's no shot," said a Styrian in pilot-jacket and green hat.

"It's been sent by God!" one young woman cried.

"That's it," laughed a third. "God has nothing better to do than send glass jars of papers to Graz."

The policeman forced his way through the crowd. The familiar cry of the limb of the law was heard:

"Make room there! Move on!"

The people respectfully made a lane. Some of them had picked up fragments of glass, wire, and armatures, and now hid them quickly in their fists and pockets.

"What's been going on here?" the constable asked.

"God has sent the caretaker the first instalment of the Christ-child," cried one noisy youth.

The policeman's stern glance passed over the faces of the grinning people.

"That there packet with the glass windows come flying out of the sky."

"Some funny fellow must have pitched it over the paling."

"Not likely," an elderly gentleman intervened. "In the first place no human being could throw from the fence to the middle here; it's too far; and besides, I saw the thing come tumbling down from high up in the air. I was just going to look at the Schlossberg clock."

"And I saw it too. I saw it from the Kepler bridge."

"And I saw it from the Körestistrasse."

They all began shouting together.

"Believe it or not," said a pretty young woman, "I was standing at the corner of the Langegasse, and suddenly, very high up, I saw something bright come dashing down out of the air like an arrow."

The woman's pretty face and refined accent had their effect. After noting down the names of the witnesses and carefully wrapping up the packet in a newspaper, the policeman hurried to police headquarters.

One eye-witness made his way to the editorial office of the *Grazer Tagespost* to report the news and earn the five schillings which that generous organ paid for interesting items of news.

CHAPTER THIRTY

ON the parade-ground on the Göstinger Au, even greater excitement reigned.

A strange aeroplane had come down just at the moment when Loisi's message had fallen on the sports ground. From the sawmills, from the Reininghaus and Zankl' colour factory, from the Kalvarienberg and neighbouring streets and houses, the people flocked up. Soup was left to go cold on the table, doors of houses and flats were left open heedlessly, as the people ran to the parade-ground. Everybody in Graz is honest, and there was, of course, no fear of anything being stolen.

With brisk strides, Herr Hungerl left the aeroplane and hastened towards the crowd. At the junction of the Kirchenweg and the Augasse, he was stopped by a soldier who, in the absence of customs officers, had been ordered by his officer to the place where the aeroplane had landed.

"Are you from that biplane there ?"

"Yes," Hungerl answered impatiently, anxious not to be delayed.

"Well, then, you can't take your suit-case with you until it has passed the customs."

"Then take the case to the customs office !" cried Hungerl angrily. He placed the leather case on the pavement and made to pass on. The soldier seized him by the arm.

"No, my friend, that won't do. You can't get past me like that. Pick that case up at once and come back to the flying-ground."

"Leave me alone, you fool. I'm detective Hungerl of Vienna Police Headquarters!" the detective roared furiously.

"What! You'd insult a soldier on duty, would you? Now, you come back with me to the aeroplane right away. Who's to know what sort of a bird you are, flying here?"

People had soon formed a dense circle round the quarrelling men. Officials arrived from the customs office and in spite of his protests Hungerl was dragged back. He defended himself, hit out furiously at the officials, and was roughly handled.

The pilot, who did not speak a word of German, shrugged his shoulders, smiling amiably, and repeating: "*Je ne comprends pas.*"

As neither the customs officers nor the employees of the Göstinger Au understood French, Hungerl was detained in the office to await the arrival of the police.

The Fourth District of Graz was treated rather cavalierly by the police. Few constables were on service there and though these were sufficient to maintain order, the poor fellows could hardly be expected on such a bitterly cold day as this to spend their hours of duty in the open while the snuggeries of the inns were so cosily warmed.

Hungerl kicked his heels in the service room of the office for over an hour. He did not allow himself to be drawn into further exchanges of abuse with the officials. Everything that was said was faithfully taken down. At last a policeman appeared, took charge of the prisoner, and escorted him to the nearest police-station, where the situation was cleared up, after which the detective dashed with all speed to the police headquarters. There, after learning that his colleague Breindl was in Constantinople following a clear trail in the pursuit of Pfleiderer, he commandeered the services of two plain clothes officers.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

THE door of Pfleiderer's flat was firmly locked, the chain protecting the entrance against duplicate keys. The master of the house was seated at the little bay window, watching the street corners of the Lindweg and Grabenstrasse, and the Gillparzerstrasse and Lindweg. His pursuers might come from either side. Perhaps they had traced him from Nice to Graz, hurried after him, and were trying to get to him here. He had heard from Frau Wurz that famous criminal detectives from Vienna had been making inquiries about him.

Herr Bindernagel was rushing about the room. Early in the morning he had made an excursion to the neighbouring Rosenberg with Fräulein Mittermaier, who during his friend's absence had never left the house. There he had made up for all the time he had wasted on the journey, most of which had been spent shut up in his little basket.

There was no Riviera sun shining in Graz in November. The early morning was dismal and cold, the grass of the fields wet. Fräulein Mittermaier soon turned back, and Herr Bindernagel had no alternative but to follow his friend. Now he was running from room to room. He was glad to be back in the old home, but was like human beings, who never feel completely happy and are always pestered by new desires as soon as one is satisfied.

The chilly dog missed the little open fire which he had worshipped every evening in Nice. The white hot brickettes had always produced a feeling of well being. He used to stare at them for minutes on end, bark softly, stretch

himself, and then wallow on the carpet in the heat. He now came to a halt before the big Dutch-tile stove in Herr Pfleiderer's room, and wondered why a shining brass door shut him off from the direct glow.

Fräulein Mittermaier watched his friend's silly behaviour with disdain. How badly brought up he was! But he would soon bring him to his senses, back to the old routine. If he didn't improve he would have to try a few cuffs on the ears. What were a cat's nimble paws for?

Suddenly Pfleiderer jumped up. At the corner of the Körblergasse a car drew up, and three men in plain clothes slowly approached the house. One was giving the others instructions.

"Frau Wurz! Frau Wurz! Come here, quick. Look down there. Is that one of the detectives?"

"Yes, yes, that's one on the right, talking all the time."

"Take your hands off the curtain. Look out! If they ring let two of them in. One of them is sure to stay at the door. Now I'm going to Hanni's room, and when these fellows are in here I'll run up to the third floor and hide myself."

"*Jesus*; then they'll get you!"

"You just do what I tell you, and don't get excited. I'll take my hat and coat and case and the dog's basket with me up to the third floor. Be very careful, Frau Wurz, or you'll give me away."

The corridor bell rang, and the ring was followed by loud knocking. Herr Bindernagel darted out into the corridor barking furiously. Pfleiderer, after a rapid look round to see that nothing that might betray him had been left lying about the room, disappeared through the dining-room door.

Her master's liberty was at stake, Frau Wurz told herself. Wild fury took possession of her and all fear of

the police vanished. She knew now that Pfleiderer was innocent and Loisi alive. She could not understand everything, but of one thing she was sure: her master was being hounded down for a crime he had not committed. She'd show these blackguards who were chasing him about the world!

"What are you making all that noise about?" she stormed at the two policemen, while Bindernagel kept up his angry barking. "Do you think I'm going to run my legs off for you?"

Hungerl looked down at the terrier. A knowing smile passed over his face. If only the little beast would stop barking so that he could see whether he hung his tongue out!

"Take that dog away or it'll feel my boot," cried the detective.

"Don't you dare touch the little fellow. Come here, Herr Bindernagel."

Hungerl's face broadened. "Bindernagel" was here. Then his master couldn't be very far off.

"What do you want?" Frau Wurz asked sharply.

"Let us in first. I see you've got the dog back. You told us yourself he was dead, and that you'd buried him with your own hands." He fixed her with a look of triumph.

"Well, I was telling lies. Herr Bindernagel is alive, as you can see for yourself. He has come back home."

"With his master."

"Not at all. You're quite wrong. He came home all by himself. The porter can tell you. When he opened the door first thing this morning, Herr Bindernagel was sitting outside."

"You don't say so? That's very interesting indeed."

"A sight more interesting than the stories you're telling

about the Herr Gemeinderat. Anyhow, you can ask the porter yourself."

"I'm going to. Fetch him up."

Frau Wurz put down Herr Bindernagel on the table and stuck her hands on her hips.

"And how long have I been *your* servant? How long have you had the right to order *me* about? You can just send your men down, if you don't mind."

"You're very pugnacious to-day. It must be because your master's back."

"I don't care what you say about me. I'm not going to answer your nonsense any more."

"Now we'll take a look through the house. I warn you; if you are trying to shield a criminal from justice it's a criminal offence."

"Who are you calling a criminal, I should like to know? You're much more of a criminal yourself."

"Now then, you calm down. I order you now to fetch the porter."

"You order your grandmother. I'm boss in this house. I daresay it would suit you nicely to be left alone in the flat. Then if anything was missing afterwards it would be *my* fault."

Hungerl was beginning to get angry, but he did not want to show it.

"You'll have to think what you're saying."

The detectives searched all the rooms, leaving no cupboard, no corner uninspected. Not a trace of the wanted man.

"Now we'll try the cellar and after that the ground floor. We'll find your master all right."

"Look away; look away!"

With the dog on her arm, Frau Wurz followed the men from room to room, Fräulein Mittermaier slinking furtively in the rear.

The three detectives had to own themselves beaten. Even the porter's quarters were searched, and the other tenants and shopkeepers in the neighbourhood questioned. Nobody had seen Herr Pfleiderer.

The porter bore out what Frau Wurz had said.

"As I was getting the door open first thing this morning, I nearly had a fit. Who do you think was standing outside there ? Our good master's little dog he was so fond of, God give him peace. I looked round all over but not a sign of Herr Pfleiderer did I see. And 'cause he's most likely dead by now."

The porter was not lying. At five minutes to six Frau Wurz had softly opened the front door, set Bindernagel on the pavement, locked the door again, and hurried upstairs unnoticed. Pfleiderer was keeping an eye on the animal from the window. The dog had looked round for Frau Wurz, and as the porter happened to open the door at that very moment, it had slipped in.

The Vienna detective would not admit defeat. He was convinced that Pfleiderer was in Graz, and it was up to him to find and arrest his man before he got out of the town again.

His two companions were stationed near the Lindweg in a concealed spot where they could watch the ex-councillor's house, from which they never took their eyes. They were to be relieved in the evening by two other policemen. Hungerl called up the car and drove to police headquarters.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

FRÄULEIN MITTERMAIER, the two-legged one, was sitting entranced before Herr Pfleiderer. Her face was beaming. She had never believed in the guilt of her landlord. She worshipped him, believed in him, and hoped that one day he would lead her to the altar. This man who had won her heart was, she knew, no criminal. And now that he had explained to her in a few words that there was not a word of truth in all the rumours about him, and that it would only take him a short time to clear up the whole affair and bring his ward back to Graz, no power on earth could have induced her to believe otherwise.

After the detectives had entered his room, Pfleiderer had gone out into the corridor and upstairs. He had intended to hide in the attic where, under the roof-beams near the main heating furnace, no one could discover him. But when he had reached the top corridor and stood before the iron attic door, he had stopped and reflected. He felt afraid. Suppose the detective brought Herr Bindernagel with him, or the dog ran after Frau Wurz? He would surely betray his master's hiding-place. Pfleiderer had not hesitated long. It was essential that he should find a safe refuge. Cautiously, he had crept down the stairs to the third floor. There a door-plate had caught his eye:

MARTA MITTERMAIER

SHORTHAND-TYPIST

was printed there in raised letters.

An inspiration came to him. This girl would, must, help him.

Steps became audible below, and voices, Frau Wurz's rising above the others. It was a moment for quick action. He would not knock first. If the door were open there would be no fear of the typist betraying him by a cry of surprise.

He was in luck's way. Without hesitating further, he opened the door, and quickly turned the key in the lock behind him; then he darted through the little kitchen, knocked, and entered.

The girl sitting at her typewriter looked up with a start at the strange bearded man.

"Don't be frightened, Fräulein Mittermaier; it's Pfleiderer."

"Dear me, is it possible; the Herr Gemeinderat?" A blush came into her face.

"If you want the money they're offering for me, you can give me up. There are detectives downstairs."

Outraged at this suggestion, she turned to him.

"What must you think of me, Herr Pfleiderer? I think much too highly of you to believe a word of all these stupid stories about you."

She was astonished to hear that little Loisi had achieved a great invention and would soon be coming to Graz herself to clear up all the complications. Pfleiderer felt he could not say more, and he begged Fräulein Mittermaier to keep what he had told her to herself.

She nodded, and swore that she would have her tongue torn out rather than breathe a word.

There came a loud knocking on the corridor-door. Both listened, and the girl glanced at the door which opened on to the balcony.

"Quick; out that way on to the balcony! Take your

things with you. You'll see a big packing case I used to keep rabbits in. Crawl into it; there's room. . . .

"What are you hammering on my door like that for? What sort of way is that to behave? Do you suppose I'm going to open it in my chemise?"

She was still fastening the press-studs of her dress at the shoulders as she looked challengingly at the two detectives.

"Sorry, young woman," said Hungerl. "We're from the police, looking for a criminal."

"Here, in my house? The November heat must have been too much for you. I'm a respectable, honest woman earning my own living in an honourable way. There are no men in my house. You can look if you like, but I shall lodge a complaint about this treatment."

The Vienna detective realized that there was nothing wrong here, but nevertheless he insisted on searching the flat if only to assert his authority.

"Certainly, if it amuses you," Fräulein Mittermaier said, signing to them to come in.

They found nothing. Hungerl apologized again and, accompanied by his colleagues, went downstairs.

The wily detective had not noticed that one window of the room was really a door opening on to a balcony, for the even more wily stenographer had pushed her big writing-desk up to it to give the impression that the room had two windows. The desk was high and no one would have suspected that there was a door behind it.

"I shall never forget this, Fräulein Mittermaier, never," said Pfleiderer, delighted at being rescued both from arrest and the cramped rabbit-hutch. "Please accept my thanks, my dear young lady."

"I don't want thanks. What I did I did gladly."

"Well, I'll go down again; it will be more healthy now."

"No, Herr Gemeinderat, stay here. I'll go and see, and tell Frau Wurz that you're up here. You won't be safe in your own flat. Stay here till to-night."

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

THE excitement of the Grazers was indescribable. As early as three o'clock the evening papers brought out a special edition, with the news of Pfleiderer's alleged return and the discovery of the Vienna detective who had flown back from the South of France and whose sensational report best illustrated the colossal craftiness of the absconded criminal. The fact that the fugitive's little dog was back in Pfleiderer's flat set aside all doubt that the wanted man was hiding in the town.

Two-thirds of the inhabitants of Graz were running about the streets, peering into everybody's faces and pestering every man they saw. All were anxious to earn the advertised reward.

Even women were annoyed. One corpulent lady who, owing to her imperfectly shaped legs, wore a longer skirt than fashion prescribed and whose head had not yet been subjected to the shears of the hair-bobber, was followed by an over-zealous Pfleiderer-hunter. In order not to let his quarry escape him, and to make sure that he was seizing the right victim, the impulsive fellow had caught her by the hair from behind with the idea of tearing off the supposed wig. He received a severe trouncing, for his victim was not the sort of woman to stand any nonsense.

The *Grazer Tagblatt* scored a great hit. For a sum of five schillings this organ had purchased the privilege of being the first newspaper in the world to publish the news of the electric message from heaven:

"ALOISIA HACKER SENDS A MESSAGE"

ran the heavy front-page headlines.

The contents of the letter were reported verbatim.

"To Police Headquarters, Graz.

"I am alive. Stop the pursuit of my guardian, Karl Pfleiderer.

"Aloisia Hacker."

The police declared the letter to be a hoax, for the handwriting experts on being questioned stated that the writing was not the same as before and that there was a possibility of its being a skilful imitation. The whole thing was alleged to be an elaborate trick played by Pfleiderer.

The police adopted a very sceptical attitude towards the statements of the eye-witnesses that the package had fallen from a height of several hundred meters. The experts who examined the remains of the glass-casing could find nothing peculiar about either the coil or the short bits of wire. They smiled cynically at the witnesses' account.

Only one aeroplane had flown over the town at the time in question: the French biplane returning from France with Hungerl. This machine, however, had not flown over the sports-ground. It had steered over the Gaisberg, west of Graz, had flown over Eggenberg, and the First District, and landed on the parade-ground without coming anywhere near the sports-ground on the bank of the Mur. A commission visited the ground and examined the place where the packet had fallen. Attempts to throw an object from outside the fence as far as the centre of the ground failed. The nearest fell thirty yards short.

This put out of court the theory that the glass-enclosed message had been thrown over the fencing of the sports-ground. It must therefore have come from above. This was a problem. It was out of the question that the people

who declared they had seen the glistening packet from the Kalvarien and Kepler bridges and the neighbouring streets should all have been suffering from hallucinations.

Nor did the statement made by the caretaker of the sports-ground help to clear the matter up.

The Pfleiderer-Aloisia Hacker mystery was becoming increasingly obscure and seemed insoluble.

The following day brought still greater excitement, and not for Graz and its inhabitants alone. The whole of Europe pricked up its ears. Over the whole continent people were tearing the newspapers out of the newsboys' hands. Everywhere people were clustered in groups discussing the inexplicable event.

The Berlin papers reported:

MYSTERIOUS MESSAGES FROM THE AIR

Yesterday the incredible report came in from Graz that a small package encased in glass fell from a height of several hundred meters on to an open space without any form of aircraft being sighted. A letter enclosed in the packet warned the Graz police to give up their search for a murderer who has long been wanted. The message was signed with the name of the girl murdered by the wanted man. It is certain that this is a hoax to throw the police off the scent. Although the occurrence cannot be explained, it is thought to be a clever move on the part of the criminal.

To-day the view put forward yesterday can no longer be maintained, for similar incidents have happened in London, Paris, Madrid, Italy, and Vienna.

The London papers reported:

Over Hyde Park, in the neighbourhood of the Marble Arch, at nine o'clock this morning, passers-by and police saw an object in the air break apart at a height of a

hundred yards. One section fell rapidly through the air and burst with a slight report (which, however, was heard by the spectators) in the dust, while the other sank more slowly to the ground. This proved to be a rolled-up piece of paper on which was written in English the following words :

"Citizens of London

"Listen to me. I rule the air. To-night at ten o'clock I will stop all broadcasting for ten minutes. Watch your timepieces."

Whereas in London, too, this was at first taken to be a joke on the part of some airman flying above the clouds, the incident had to be reconsidered when at short intervals telegrams reporting similar incidents came in from Paris, Madrid, Italy and Vienna.

In Paris, the air message was received at quarter past nine ; in Madrid quarter of an hour later ; Italy reported its arrival at quarter to ten ; while the mysterious package fell in Vienna about nine.

In each case the circumstances were similar. In each case the packages split at a certain height ; one part exploded in the air and the other was found to contain the message written in English. Always the words were the same. In no case was an aeroplane visible.

The world was thrown into a state of uproar. Many people were panic-stricken, thinking it to be a genuine message from Heaven.

Scientists found themselves confronted with a problem.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

AT Königswusterhausen Station Loisi bought several Berlin papers. The sensational headline "Mysterious messages from the air" at once struck the reader's eye.

Everywhere passengers were sitting or standing, eagerly devouring the reports. Groups with heads thrust forward, flushed faces, and vigorously gesticulating hands were discussing the devastating news.

People seemed to have lost all control. Never had an event aroused such excitement.

On the platform a tall slim youth was waiting, whose eyes took in everything and whose ears did not miss a word of what was said around him. His pale face looked worn, despite the vivacious glance. No one heeded him. All were in the grip of this uncanny news. Those bold spirits who regarded the affair as a joke and made no secret of their opinion were shouted down and ordered to hold their tongues.

No one had the slightest idea that the pale young man in the old-fashioned coat, too short in the sleeves, was the cause of all the disturbance. Anyone who had proclaimed that this young man was the lord of the air, the world's greatest inventor and genius, would have been laughed to scorn, taken for a madman.

And no one among all these people who had been shaken out of their normal placidity believed that any human brain could have compassed such an achievement.

Loisi sat in the train, reading the papers and listening

to the conversation. The silliest and wildest guesses were hazarded. An hour before, when she had visited a barber, the assistant had told her that these messages from the air originated in Mars, and that the inhabitants of that planet would soon be declaring war on the earth and carrying off the earth's inhabitants as slaves.

In the third-class compartment in which Loisi was sitting the talk turned exclusively on the messages from heaven, as one prosperous-looking elderly gentleman called them.

"God himself is warning men to pause and think, to return to the faith."

"Don't talk such nonsense!" cried an emaciated, bespectacled little man. "God doesn't need to use means like that. From what the Graz papers say it's clear that the package which fell from the sky is fitted with coils, electric armatures, and wires. That shows it's a mechanical invention. Of course it's of tremendous significance—that can't be denied—but it's sacrilege to make God responsible. The only pity is that the mechanism of the package that fell in Graz was completely destroyed by contact with the hard ground and many parts carried off by the people who saw it and came running up; otherwise the apparatus could have been reconstructed. Then it wouldn't have been so difficult to explain it all.

"The six messages which came down yesterday in various towns of Europe had been more cleverly contrived. All the reports say that the packages split at a certain height, and all that reached the ground was a piece of paper, folded several times. Most of the rest exploded in the air and only charred fragments were found."

Loisi hid her face behind the newspaper to hide the smile which passed over it.

The idea of destroying the mechanism of the packages

by explosives had been hers, and Montford had been responsible for carrying it out. The packages were divided into two parts, and a small insulated detonator had been inserted into the coil of the receiver with a wire running from the case to the contact spring. Two zinc wires held the two sections of the packet together. The ends of the wires were intertwined and fastened by a second contact to the terminal of the coil.

The screen of the television apparatus made it possible not only to steer the projectile by means of a 48-times amplifier, but also to follow the flight with precision when the transmitter was tuned into the desired wave-length, or when it was necessary to transfer to another. The drop could be exactly regulated. The ends of the zinc wires were fused, and the two sections parted from the message. The wires fitted to the coil continued to glow and shortly after the break exploded the cartridge.

This device made it impossible henceforward for outsiders to solve the construction of the current-receiver.

Loisi thought: If the invention one day is put into general practical use, little parachutes can be fitted to the packet, which could be opened, just as previously the cartridges had been exploded, by a single connection, without damaging the intricate little armatures and instruments, which would then land at the appointed place slowly and undamaged.

"The fellow who has upset the whole world like this ought to be hanged. A man like that is a public danger."

Laying the paper on her lap, Loisi looked across at the speaker. It was an apoplectic gentleman who stared angrily from one passenger to another.

"Why kill anyone for making a great discovery?" Loisi could not restrain herself from shouting these words

aloud. "And after all, is it necessarily a man who made this invention? Mightn't it be a woman?"

"Young man," cried the other as the train ran into Joachimstal station, "young man, we're not talking about face-creams or brassières or reducing rollers! Women can invent idiotic things like that, but not this sort of thing."

Before Loisi could produce a reply, the train drew up and the man got out.

"What's the point of arguing?" Loisi thought. "I'll show them what a woman, a silly girl, from the land of the Nazis they make such fun of, can do." She then buried herself in the papers for the rest of the journey.

The report from Berlin was interesting:

Patrons of the Romanischers Café lunch table rushed on to the open space in front of the establishment and pushed their way through a crowd which stretched from the Kapitol to the church wall. All traffic was held up, and the police hurried to the scene were struggling to clear a space. Above, between the two turrets, a little cloud of smoke was drifting in the dark November sky.

Everybody was shouting together:

"I saw it flying over the Tauentzienstrasse!" cried the shrill falsetto voice of a painted youth.

A second gesticulated with both hands, grimaced, and roared, straining his vocal chords:

"The thing burst right over my head. It was like the war over again!"

"Who's got the thing that fell?" a young police sergeant asked, assuming the stern expression of a dictator.

"There it is. Olle has got the message from the air."

A devastating glance from the lady's eyes was directed upon the bold speaker. She was at no loss for an answer.

"Give it here!" the policeman ordered, and he unfolded

a large piece of paper to which was attached a note bearing a few words.

"Can anyone here speak French?" he asked severely.

"But that's English, sergeant," chirped a young lady with her face heavily made up.

The emergency squadron was ordered to clear the square. Traffic was started again, and the long row of cars, trams, motor-buses and various kinds of vehicles gradually disentangled itself.

The Paris report was brief:

Over the Place de la Concorde passers-by noticed this morning about ten o'clock (when no aircraft was in sight) a falling body explode and a small package fall to the earth.

The police are engaged upon solving this mystery.

The report from Madrid, where the occurrence had taken place in front of the royal palace, was almost the same, and the telegrams from Milan stated that great throngs of people had assembled in front of the railway station after the message had dropped. The Council of Ministers had immediately been convened, as it was at first supposed that neighbouring enemy states were preparing an attack on the kingdom. All soldiers on leave were ordered back to their garrisons.

But the most interesting reports came from Vienna. The special correspondent of the *Illustrated Supplement* described humorously how the square in front of the Karlskirche had looked almost as it did in the early days of political demonstration. When finally it became known that an airpost similar to that in Graz, though in another language, had hurtled from the clouds with an explosion, the Viennese had calmed themselves, gone to their second breakfast, and cracked jokes about it.

At the big newspaper-stand near the exit of the Zoo Station, Loisi bought *das Neue Wiener Journal*, the *Neue Freie Presse*, and the *Pester Loyd*. Her request for a Graz paper met with a negative reply from the man in charge of the stand, who, however, pointed out that the papers of the Styrian capital would for a certainty be taken in by the Romanischers Café.

Loisi looked at the station clock. She still had an hour before she must meet her guardian. She asked a passer-by to direct her to the café mentioned by the newsagent, and five minutes later was sitting in front of a cup of coffee over the *Grazer Tagblatt*.

The Loisi Hacker affair occupied more than two pages. The police still believed it to be a hoax. The message alleged to have descended from the air was regarded as a silly practical joke. The discovery and following of Pfleiderer's trail filled three columns.

> *The wanted man is at present in hiding in Graz, and it is only a matter of hours before he is arrested. The fact that the little terrier has suddenly turned up again is a sure sign of the presence of Aloisia Hacker's missing guardian. The housekeeper has already been interrogated four times, but persists in her denial. None of the tenants in the house has seen Pfleiderer.*
>
> *Attention is particularly called to the fact that the criminal now wears a heavy beard and moustache. He has become very slim. All stations and motor routes are being carefully watched and police have been everywhere notified. Information likely to lead to the arrest of the criminal should be reported to the nearest police station, or to police headquarters at Graz.*

Die Dresdner Neuesten Nachrichten published a startling revelation :

With regard to the mysterious messages which are throwing the whole world into excitement, we learn the following:

The technical College of Untersberg in Saxony has been in communication with our special correspondent by telephone.

The Rector made the following statement:

"*More than two years ago, a student from Graz named Alois Hacker entered the college as a student. After two terms, and before the completion of his course, he left our establishment and leased a large open space on the Bretzelberg which lies outside the town. Here Hacker, who in his second year had already rented a room for his experiments at a house belonging to the locksmith Herman, lived alone on the mountain. He had the clearing in which his workshop lay enclosed with a fence four yards high, and admitted no one to the place.*

"*Hacker, who had been recommended as highly gifted and possessing great inventive talent, drew suspicions upon himself immediately after joining through various incidents. He managed to obtain permission to live alone, avoided all social contact outside study hours, and in his second year took no part in the sports of the college.*

"*Telephone conversations with our sister Institutions at Mittweida and Hohenwelten have now revealed that, a year before the entry of the mysterious student into our college, a certain Fräulein Aloisia Hacker applied from Graz to be enrolled, but was rejected owing to the regulations of these colleges, where there is no provisions for women students.*

"*The Untersberg staff regard it as manifest that the student Alois Hacker is a girl who obtained admittance to the college by means of false papers.*

"*Alois Hacker is in reality Aloisia Hacker, the girl from Graz.*

"It is not impossible, nay, in view of the young lady's extraordinary gifts, for such they must be called, there can be no doubt that she has made a discovery which enables her to interrupt the radio waves of large broadcasting stations and use them for her own purposes.

"And there is a further point to be noticed.

"For some months all trace has also been lost of the American professor, Sydney Montford, whose services were secured two years ago for our college. Montford alleged that his weakened health compelled him to ask for several months' leave. As the American during last year had been really ill and was undergoing a cure in Switzerland, the council of this college felt compelled to acquiesce. The salary forwarded at the end of the month to the address left by the professor was returned marked 'not known'. As Montford used to take a special interest in Hacker, even taking his place for three nights on the mountain, as we have learned from Herman's maid, we may assume that the professor is now in Hacker's company. The student, or rather Fräulein Hacker, left her place on the mountain some months ago, and since that time we have had no further word of Montford.

"The police at once embarked upon thorough investigations in the clearing on the Bretzelberg, but could find nothing of interest. In an old cistern were found a few glass and porcelain insulators and a collection of wires. The corrugated-iron building, the wooden hut, and the fencing had been taken down by Herr Herman. The latter, on being questioned, stated that he had no idea where the student had gone, but had several times heard the professor talking about America. . . ."

Loisi had turned pale as she read the report from Dresden. So her incognito had been discovered! Now she would

have to be more careful. If they caught her, she might reckon on punishment and would never reach the great goal she had set before herself.

Slowly, lost in thought, she crossed the Tauentzienstrasse and Rankestrasse. She was afraid of being recognized. Where was this Restaurant Atlantik? When she chose it, she had taken the address at random from the Berlin telephone book.

"Atlantik" she read on a big sign over a place in the Kurfürstendamm.

Diffidently Loisi entered the restaurant. A tall waiter with the appearance and manners of a diplomat helped her out of her coat and looked at her unfashionable suit. She had grown with the years, but had bought herself nothing new. The trousers were much too short.

In the back room there were still a few diners. At one table were seated a number of ladies, and a bald man whose watery-blue, vacant eyes vainly sought to produce an expression of intelligence.

As Loisi passed he gave her a disdainful look and remarked: "Reach-me-downs!"

A black-haired young lady with large dark eyes stroked her sheep-dog and looked approvingly at the young man who was being conducted by the friendly *maître d'hôtel* to a corner table.

Loisi's guardian had not yet arrived. Had it not been rash on her part to ask him to meet her in this place; in a restaurant? His description had been posted everywhere.

What did that woman with the dark eyes want? She would do better to talk to her neighbours at table or stroke her dog. The tall fair lady next to the dark one seemed to be the wife of the proprietor; she was smiling sourly at the words of the goggle-eyed fop.

The sheep-dog rose, walked over to Loisi, laid its head

on her knee, and gazed at her with its beautiful, loyal, eloquent eyes.

"Come here, Lori," its mistress called.

The dog carefully took the lump of sugar from Loisi's hand and returned gloomily to its mistress.

"You know," the dark woman called across, and it was at once obvious that she was an Austrian, "you know, young man, the dog must learn to obey. He ought not to go to other people."

Loisi did not reply. She hid her face behind the *Neuer Wiener Journal*. If only her guardian would come!

A dandy in a monocle entered the room, took out his blurred eyeglass, and wiped it with his silk handkerchief.

"Mertens!" cried the facetious gentleman at the lady's table, "Mertens, see if you can't get the address of the air-packet juggler; we'll get our agent to book him for the Charlott Kasino."

As no one laughed at his joke, he stepped into the breach himself and in restrained fury called up a waiter.

"How people are talking about me!" Loisi thought. "If only I could tell that fellow over there what I thought of him! Where can Herr Pfleiderer be? He can't have got himself caught?" She hurriedly turned over the sheets of the Berlin paper to see if she could find anything about Pfleiderer's arrest.

An elegant lady swathed in a handsome fur came down the centre passage. She was already getting on in years and was on the look-out for adventure. She preferred very young men. Her languid eye lit up behind the lorgnette which she had trained on Loisi.

"May I sit here?"

"No," said Loisi curtly. "The place is taken."

Without wasting another look, the woman sat down at another table.

Then Pfleiderer came into the restaurant. He was clean shaven again, and so altered by loss of weight that Loisi was about to send him away too, when he sat down suddenly beside her without a word of greeting. Then she recognized him and gave a sigh of relief.

He laughed, retained his hold of her hand, looked into her face, and said softly:

"It's getting time you came back to Crescentia; you look wretched."

The waiter was standing by the table.

"*Mokka double.*"

"And for me," said Loisi. "This isn't coffee at all."

"We can't stay here, Guardian. Everybody can hear what we're saying," she whispered to him.

Ten minutes later they were driving down the Budapester Strasse. Pfleiderer related his adventures in Graz.

Fräulein Mittermaier had let Frau Wurz know quietly that her master was upstairs in her flat. He was to wait there till nightfall, for he would not be safe in his own.

At first the old housekeeper was not too well pleased that her master should have chosen just that place to hide in, but her sense of justice won the day as soon as she realized what a great service the typist had rendered Pfleiderer, and how she had saved him from arrest. Below, the two detectives were keeping watch by the house and before dark they would be relieved by two others. At five o'clock Hungerl suddenly appeared with three policemen. He had made inquiries and searched in all Pfleiderer's houses, turning everything upside down at Crescentia's too, surprised and questioned friends of the former councillor, and inspected their abodes.

Frau Wurz trembled lest there should be further investigations in the flats of the other tenants, for it was impossible for her to warn Fräulein Mittermaier. Her fear was

unfounded. After leaving the flat in an indescribable state, Hungerl had gone out of the house.

The two policemen on the street remained at their post.

Pfleiderer spent the whole day in the stenographer's flat. He often ran to the window and peered through the curtains. The watchers did not stir from their position.

In vain the fugitive racked his brains to think of a way of getting out of the house without being seen by the policemen. Fräulein Mittermaier went into the courtyard and looked furtively across the waste ground behind the garden gate, and there too saw strangers watching the house. There was even a man pacing up and down the courtyard.

Pfleiderer had to get away. He must not miss his appointment with Loisi or he would not know where to meet her again. He did not know her present address. The only chance was to catch the slow train at eight o'clock, or the midnight express. The station was being very strictly watched.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

FEMININE resource is superior to masculine wisdom. Fräulein Mittermaier hit upon the right plan of escape and laid it before Pfleiderer and Frau Wurz. First of all she would go to the station and take a ticket for the slow train to Vienna. The escape from the house would have to be attempted not later than seven, and Pfleiderer was to climb over the wall of the Steinfelder cemetery, walk along the line, hide in the signal-box which stood just beyond the platform, and then, when the train was in, try to board a carriage from the opposite side.

The helpful stenographer was very anxious to acquire a railwayman's uniform. In Wellisch's clothing emporium in the Herrengasse she found a long pilot cape with a hood, and at a second shop in the Kosakengasse a railwayman's coat and cap.

At half-past six Pfleiderer ate a hearty supper, while Fräulein Mittermaier sat with Frau Wurz in the next room. Herr Bindernagel was on his master's lap and kept examining his altered, now beardless, face. A great anxiety weighed upon his dog's soul. There on the floor stood a little suit-case. So his master was going off on another journey. Would he take him too? Would those splendid walks on the warm sunny shore begin again? Would he once more be able to stretch himself out in front of those glowing brickettes in the open fireplace? The little animal's eyes looked sad; he felt that his master was going to leave him behind. Pfleiderer said that the dog's grief had deeply affected him. He had picked up the

little fellow in his arms and squeezed and fondled him.

Fräulein Mittermaier came into the room with Frau Wurz, and Pfleiderer was astounded to see the typist dressed in a man's trousers and boots. She again explained in detail what Herr Pfleiderer had to do in order to get out of the house unobserved, and urged him to put on the railwayman's coat and cap. He followed her instructions while she pulled down deep over her eyes a Styrian hat adorned with a tuft of chamois hair.

Below, the policemen were standing opposite the house, blowing cigar-smoke into the cold night air. They never let the house out of their sight, keeping their eyes glued to the windows of the first floor.

That Loisi should have sent a message to police headquarters in Graz, Pfleiderer felt to be a piece of folly on the girl's part. No one would believe that the message really came from her; they would lay the responsibility for the hoax upon him. The police would certainly be still more on the alert now, and set every lever in motion to capture him.

"Well, keep a sharp look out," Fräulein Mittermaier had said. "Frau Wurz will turn the key in the courtyard door so that the man in the yard can't get into the hall. I will then come out of the front door suddenly in my man's clothes, take a few steps slowly in the direction of the Grabenstrasse, and then suddenly break into a run, and jump into the car which is waiting at the corner. The driver has my instructions. He'll drive off as quickly as possible.

"The police are sure to take me for Herr Pfleiderer and run after me. Then you mustn't lose a moment, Herr Pfleiderer. When the watchers rush after me, you come out of the house, cross the street, and go through the garden of the Schneiders' house. No one will recognize

you in the uniform; no one will suspect. You must keep close to the courtyard gardens, then come through the passage opposite the Blind Institute on to the Grabenstrasse. Then go north to avoid running into the detectives in case they overtake me and find out their mistake. At the corner of the Servitutsweg a taxi will be waiting for you. Drive in that to the Friedhofgasse. From there you know your way."

"The sweat was standing out on my forehead, Loisi," Pfleiderer went on, as they walked along the Landwehr canal towards the Potsdamerstrasse. No one took any notice of them.

"I should never have thought Fräulein Mittermaier was so intelligent," said Loisi. "You'll have to marry her when you come back."

"Don't be silly, Loisi. Well, to go on. I said good-bye to Herr Bindernagel. The poor little fellow didn't want to part from me and I comforted him and told him I'd soon be back. A few minutes after seven we crept cautiously downstairs. When we got to the first floor, Frau Wurz let the dog into the flat, and we went on to the ground floor. I felt like a real criminal, Loisi, trembling in every limb.

"When we were down, we stood quite still for a moment. I think poor Frau Wurz was the most frightened of us when she turned the key in the courtyard door. The girl from the third floor was quite cool—I should never have expected it of her. All at once she said to me: 'Look out, Herr Gemeinderat.' She has never been able to drop that. Well, she said: 'Look out, I'm going now,' and with a couple of strides she had reached the front door and was outside. Suddenly I heard a whistle and shouts of 'Stop! stop!' The man in the court came rushing up and shook the door. There was a shot outside. Frau

Wurz gave me a shove, and I was in the street. There was no sign of the detectives.

"They had obviously gone after the car. The noise had brought people out of their houses and in spite of the cold some curious individuals had pulled up their windows. No one took any notice of me, so there was no need to go through the Schneiders' garden, but I went on to the Grabenstrasse and from there to the Servitutsweg. I didn't take the taxi, but went on by a roundabout way over the Kalvarien bridge to the Steinfelder cemetery. I avoided the busy streets and when I couldn't help it crossed them quickly.

"The cemetery gate was open. I couldn't help feeling rather queer as I went on among the graves. I had to look a long time before I found a place where I could get over the wall. I had to creep over old Kratzl's grave—he used to be our Mayor—and the drop nearly broke my back; it was a bit too high.

"The south line was quite deserted and behind the wall I climbed over the fencing. Under an arc lamp I looked at my watch and saw it was twenty to eight. I was wet through, and my teeth were chattering with cold. It was quite a long way to the station. I met several people and some of them even said good evening, but nobody looked closely at me.

"The train was already in the station, but I remained on the opposite side and from behind a mail-van kept an eye on the station clock. At the last moment I climbed into a third-class carriage and at once shut myself in the lavatory. I wrapped the railwayman's coat and hat in a piece of paper and went with my parcel and suit-case into the second class. The train was already moving."

"It all went very well," laughed Loisi.

"I thought I should have had a stroke when all at once

I saw Fräulein Mittermaier standing in the corridor with her fingers on her lips. Immediately afterwards the guard came into the compartment—a very talkative gentleman.

" 'What a crazy crew!' he said. 'Were you in with them?' Fräulein Mittermaier nodded behind his back.

" 'Yes,' I answered. 'They came in here too.'

" 'They didn't find anything,' the guard went on. 'One of the detectives said the bird must have got away in a car.'

"I paid the excess, for I had only a third-class ticket, and when the official had gone, the typist came in and sat with me. She was already in her woman's clothes again. I was amazed.

" 'I took off the trousers and boots in the taxi,' she explained. 'I had tucked up my skirt and had my felt hat under the cape. The boots were in the overcoat pockets. I can assure you, Herr Gemeinderat,' and here she looked round to see if anyone was listening, 'that ruffian nearly shot me. The bullet just missed my right arm and went into the seat facing me. But they didn't get me. They came after me in a taxi they had picked up in the Wickenburg, but the traffic police held them up at the Murplatz and I disappeared from the taxi with my bundle. I quickly pressed ten schillings into the driver's hand and he drove on. I was standing at the corner of the Feuerbachgasse when the detectives dashed past. Then I walked slowly with my bundle through the Annengassen to the station, left the bundle in the left luggage office, took a ticket to Bruck, and got in. I've been standing all the time in the corridor, even when the police were searching everything. I was asked if I had seen a man with a beard. I said yes, there was one sitting in the next coach. They dashed in and there found an old, old gentleman with a long white beard. But it was all very frightening.' "

"She's plucky, Guardian," said Loisi admiringly. "I should never have suspected it. Well, well . . . love, you know!"

"Don't be childish, Loisi," said Pfleiderer, and resumed his story. "At Bruck she got out, taking my railway uniform with her, and pushed a large envelope into my hand. 'Open that later and don't forget: you must get out at Baden and go on by the electric. But only as far as Meidling. From there take the usual tramway and go to the quay. With the town railway you can get as far as Tulln and after that you can catch the Berlin express.'

"Before I could thank her, the train had stopped in Bruck and she was gone.

"I can't tell you, Loisi, how astonished I was when I found in the letter eight thousand schillings, and a note in which the good soul told me she was lending me the money until I came back. She said she had heard that Frau Wurz was only able to give me five thousand and I was to take the money."

"No, really!" Loisi tapped her guardian's arm. "You'll have to marry the girl."

"Don't talk nonsense, Loisi. I did everything that Fräulein Mittermaier had said. They'd have caught me in Vienna for a certainty, but in Tulln no one took any notice of me."

They had come to a standstill not far from the Anhalter station.

"You have the ticket, Loisi. Please go and get me my case from the left-luggage office. I'll wait here in the entrance."

"I'd better take lodgings somewhere; I'm not safe in a hotel," Pfleiderer said, when Loisi came back with the case.

"It would be much better," Loisi answered.

Pfleiderer took a room in the Wilhemstrasse not far from the Hedemannstrasse. He only intended to stay a day or two in Berlin, then go on to Denmark and find lodgings in some small town.

The pair took a simply-furnished room with tawdry but clean furniture.

"Bring us something cold to eat and two bottles of beer," Pfleiderer said to the landlady. "Well," he said, turning to Loisi as the woman left the room, "now I'd like to hear something about you, Loisi. How far have you got with your work, and when shall I be able to go back to Graz and enjoy a little peace ?"

"It won't be long, Guardian ; perhaps in the spring."

"All that time off ?"

"Oh, but other inventors have taken a lifetime over much smaller inventions, so Syd says."

"Syd ? And who is Syd ?"

The blood rose to Loisi's face. Pfleiderer winked slightly with his left eye.

"What are you winking at ? Doctor Montford's name is Sydney and he tells me he was always called Syd when he was a boy."

"But who is Mr. Sydney Montford ?"

"Haven't I told you about him yet ?" Loisi spoke hurriedly. It looked as though she wanted to conceal something.

"Mr. Montford is a professor who is working with me."

"How old is the Herr Professor ? These learned men are always pretty elderly, aren't they ?"

"Why should you be interested in his age, Herr Pfleiderer ? He's thirty at the most."

"Now I understand the meaning of those words that came over the radiograph."

"Do you want to hear something about my invention ?

You know already that I've managed the planeless airpost. But I've done a very silly thing."

"What do you mean ?" He looked at her in surprise.

"I don't know whether you know of the message I dropped on the sports-ground by the Mur ?"

"Oh, yes, I know about that all right. But what was there silly about that ?"

"I signed myself *Aloisia Hacker*. Look, read that," and she handed him the Dresden paper.

"Yes, my word, that's a pity !" said Pfleiderer, after reading the paragraph. "Now there's no need for me to go on hiding."

"Of course you must go on hiding. I can't show myself yet or I'd be locked up, and that would be the end of my work."

"How ? I don't understand."

"In its present stage my invention is a public danger. I can jam all radio. I can interrupt an S.O.S. message and the ship goes down. I can do a thousand other things. The League of Nations is certain to interest itself in my invention. That would mean the end of my experiments."

"But why do you want to go on with it if things are so bad ?"

"You know well enough. Because I want to make my country a present of it, our Fatherland that everybody pokes fun at."

He looked straight into her face, unable to conceal his admiration.

"Who are you ? I always think you must have come from another world."

"I don't, but perhaps some day I shall be able to get to one while I'm still alive."

"You can't think how proud I am of you. Some day the Graz people will look back with shame at their behaviour,

and I can see them now taking the statue of the Archduke Johann down from its pedestal in front of the Rathaus and setting up a bronze Loisi Hacker with an Eton crop!"

"My ambitions don't lie that way. First I want to develop my invention, and then you'll be surprised at what will happen the following spring."

"I'm curious to see. You're capable of reaching down the moon."

"And now I'll have to touch you for some more money. How much can you let me have?"

"How much do you want?"

"To last me to the spring, however careful I am, I shall want twelve hundred schillings a month. I can manage quite well with ten thousand schillings."

"Heavens, all that!"

"Then you haven't much left for me?" Loisi spoke anxiously.

"Oh, yes, I have. I still have over forty thousand schillings of the money I took with me two years ago."

"Oh, that's splendid! splendid! Now I feel a new girl. Can I have the money to-day?"

"Of course. It's all just as before I went away, brand new thousands."

"Good. Then listen, Guardian. You want to go to Denmark. Have you chosen a town yet?"

"More or less. I was thinking of going to Odense. It's in a beautiful position and they won't look for me there."

"I'm glad I know. Have your apparatus ready every evening between ten and eleven. Oh!—" she paused anxiously—"have you got the apparatus with the television screen with you?"

"It's in the bag there."

"Thank Heaven! What name will you go by there?"

"I haven't thought about that yet. Wait a minute." He went to the window. On the other side of the street the sign of an inn was blazing. Dozens of coloured lamps spelled out the name *Moldenhauer*. "Come here, Loisi. You see that name over there? I'm Fritz Moldenhauer until further notice. Make a note of the name."

"I'll write it down: *Fritz Moldenhauer, Odense, Denmark.* At all costs go once a week to the general post office and ask whether there are any letters for Fritz Moldenhauer."

Loisi took a taxi to the Görlitzer station and caught the last train for Königswusterhausen. During the drive through the dark she was very worried lest chance should have placed in Montford's hands a newspaper naming Aloisia Hacker as the disturber of the wireless waves.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

DETECTIVE HUNGERL stormed and raged. He inwardly cursed and abused the Graz detectives who had let the bird slip through their fingers.

Frau Wurz was hauled off to Police Headquarters and questioned until midnight. She protested vigorously against this treatment, and in exasperation the clever Vienna detective, who already believed he had the fox in the trap, was obliged to let the woman go. Nothing could be got out of the housekeeper. She had not been as abusive as might have been expected, but had met all his questions with an unshakable silence.

A further thorough search of the flat and the whole house from cellar to attic had revealed no more than had the two previous attempts. As no one in Fräulein Mittermaier's flat opened to repeated knocking, the flat was forced, but without any result.

The tenants were very annoyed, and the detectives had to put up with a good deal of abuse.

At the station all the detectives of Graz were busy searching every train out or in. No traveller could pass on to the platform without being carefully scrutinized.

Bearded men had a particularly trying time at the hands of the police. Eleven persons were arrested for insulting the men in uniform.

The search spread everywhere, and only in the case of the eight o'clock for Vienna had it not occurred to a single policeman to watch the train from the opposite platform. One, indeed, had noticed a railwayman getting

into a carriage from that side, but he had taken little notice.

This railwayman was the hunted man, accused of the abduction and murder of his ward.

Hungerl's exasperation increased when, dead tired, he was fetched out of bed at four in the morning and confronted at the station by an arrested man who bore not the slightest resemblance to Pfleiderer.

Again at six o'clock there was a ring at the bell calling the detective, who had just returned to bed. His colleague Breindl was responsible. He was sitting in the next room looking very pleased with himself when Hungerl appeared after hastily dressing.

"I've got him!" cried Breindl, leaping up from his chair.

"Really?" Hungerl was now wide awake. He was inwardly bursting with rage that his colleague should have been the lucky one to lay hands on the fugitive.

"I got him just as he was going to board a cattle truck."

"A cattle truck?"

"Yes. It was full of sheep."

"At the main station?" Hungerl asked.

"Yes, at the Stambul goods station."

"But is there a Stambul station at Graz? I've never heard of it. No one has ever mentioned it to me."

"But Hungerl; who's talking about Graz?"

"Then where did you get him?"

"Why, in Constantinople. Haven't you been told that I've been to Constantinople following a certain trail?"

"Breindl, you're an ass. Pfleiderer was in Graz yesterday. When did you arrest him?"

Breindl was indignant. He thrust his hands into his pockets, looked at his colleague scornfully, and threw himself back into his chair.

"I got him in Constantinople. He hasn't denied that he's Pfleiderer; and what's more, when I asked him where his ward was, he said he had left her in Athens. When I accused him to his face of killing the girl, he said quite coolly: 'Very likely.' Well, my friend, who's the ass now?"

Hungerl reflected. After all, *had* Pfleiderer been in Graz yesterday? Might he not have flown to Constantinople? It was quite on the cards that someone else might have brought the dog to Graz for him. But was it likely that Pfleiderer would have at once admitted his name, and practically confessed the murder?

Half an hour later the two detectives were drinking their morning coffee in the Café Europa in the Herrengasse.

"Was I right, Breindl, when I said you were an ass?"

Breindl jabbed his roll through the whipped cream floating on his coffee. He threw an angry glance at his colleague and spattered his tie. He had left the roll too long in the hot coffee and now had to fish a big piece out of the opening of his waistcoat.

"Didn't it occur to you that a man might accuse himself of murder in order to be conveyed from Constantinople to Graz gratis, to say nothing of being done well on the way!"

That afternoon Hungerl took train to Vienna, and from there flew to Dresden. His intention now was to discover the whereabouts of the student Aloisia Hacker. Pfleiderer would be found where she was.

If the ward were really alive, and proved to be the student

Alois Hacker, there was, of course, nothing against Pfleiderer and the warrant for his arrest must be withdrawn. So long as this did not happen, however, the rewards offered were payable. What Hungerl felt so sensitive about was his reputation as a detective. His career must not suffer.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

THE credulous believed that the Judgment Day had come.

The churches began to fill.

The newspapers did roaring business. The rotary machines were never still. Extra editions were poured out hourly in vast numbers and the streets were covered with a litter of papers.

There were many who tried to treat the matter as a joke, while inwardly trembling; and there were others who mocked at the whole thing. Those who were unmoved made the most of their opportunity, and saw to it that, like the Press, they made capital out of the mysterious affair.

Aloisia Hacker's name was in every mouth.

Decades before, there had been quarters of the globe which news of the Great World War had not reached, but almost with the swiftness of an electric spark the accounts of Aloisia Hacker's miraculous invention and mastery of the electric waves had spread to the remotest corners of the entire globe.

The governments of every country were occupying themselves with the affair. The police developed a feverish activity.

Nowhere were they clear what attitude to adopt towards this girl. What crime could she be accused of? The harm she had done by jamming the radio did not justify branding her as a criminal. Nor did the crippling of the world's wireless communications offer an excuse for a major complaint.

The League of Nations held an extraordinary session. For weeks these wise men debated, without reaching any result. Opinion was divided, and unanimity could not be attained.

The reason was easy to guess.

Each state hoped that it would itself obtain possession of the invention and so steal a march on the rest.

Finally a decision was reached in Geneva that all states should take up the pursuit, arrest the inventress and her American assistant, Sydney Montford, and try them before an international tribunal.

No disturbances of wireless had occurred meanwhile. The world was beginning to calm down, and the newspapers had to return to their normal issues. The day of extra editions was over.

The police, however, did not remain inactive. The search for Aloisia Hacker was intensively pursued. The activity of the police officials was noticeable everywhere. Search was systematically carried on in the mountains and in the most remote places. The provinces were divided into areas, and each area was allotted to a group of police who relentlessly combed the whole neighbourhood. Often not a house in the villages or countryside was spared. The police would suddenly appear without the slightest warning.

Coiners' dens were unearthed in the most unexpected places; secret gambling hells and houses of vice were discovered; criminals long hunted in vain were caught; but of Aloisia Hacker, her guardian, and Sydney Montford, the American, no trace was found.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

THE state attorneyship in Graz withdrew the warrant for Pfleiderer's arrest. There was no further reason for hunting him. The only thing that remained against him was suspicion of giving false information, for investigation had revealed that her guardian had signed Alois Hacker's application for enrolment in the Untersberger Technikum. Not only must he have been aware of Aloisia Hacker's false papers ; he must have acquired them himself.

Kirchner, the registrar, had described the councillor's visit to the Rathaus, and stated that he had been sent out of the office by his child's godfather, who had been in an unusual state of excitement.

As the forgery had done no one any serious harm, Pfleiderer was not liable to any serious penalty.

How Aloisia Hacker had obtained possession of the baptism certificate form was easily explained ; for the minister of St. Andrew's Church declared that the girl had asked him, during a christening, to be allowed to fill in the form, and had probably taken the opportunity to annex another. The guardian must certainly have been aware of this.

The people of Graz now changed their feelings and attitude towards Pfleiderer. Many remembered what a good man the ex-councillor had been. Many forgot that a short time ago they had spoken of him with horror as a murderer of women, a repulsive libertine, and imputed to him other dreadful crimes that had nothing to do with the abduction and murder of his ward.

Kirchner was turned out with scant ceremony by Frau Wurz when he fawningly tried to express his sympathy with the little Karl's godfather.

"You blackguard!" Frau Wurz had cried, and brandishing a rolling-pin, had driven the hypocrite out of the flat. "Do you think I don't know what you've been babbling about my master? Don't let me set eyes on you here again!"

Frau Wurz, Crescentia, and Fräulein Mittermaier formed a trio who felt it incumbent upon them to champion Pfleiderer's honour vigorously to all and sundry.

The old housekeeper had asked Fräulein Mittermaier's permission to call her Marta, as the cat was too old to have its name changed.

"Certainly, Frau Wurz; just call me Marta. You've no need to apologize because the little animal has my name; I'm only too proud. I only wish I was as beautiful as the four-legged Fräulein Mittermaier!" And as she spoke she stroked the purring cat on her lap, who had struck up a close friendship with his involuntary godmother.

Crescentia came once a week to take coffee with Frau Wurz. She was now contented and only anxious about her Loisi.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

HUNGERL had set his mind on finding Pfleiderer and Loisi. He knew that the warrant for Pfleiderer had been withdrawn, but he had obtained permission from his superiors to make a private search for Aloisia Hacker's mysterious station.

There were three of them, the Vienna detective told himself: the girl, her guardian, and the American. Three are easier to find than one. Hungerl was firmly convinced that the trio were living together. He followed trails which led to every country of the continent, but had no more luck than any of the groups of international detectives who were engaged on the search over the whole of Europe. Hungerl fared like all the rest. Not one of them thought of looking for the inventor in the place where she really was to be found. No inquiries were made in Königswusterhausen. It occurred to no one that the "criminals" might be living in a villa outside the town, busily working on the Graz girl's invention.

CHAPTER FORTY

THE affair would almost have been forgotten, had not a phenomenon which occurred in the February sky over Berlin and Pomerania thrown people into a state of violent agitation.

For two days the sky had been overcast. The clouds hung heavy and deep. A cold north-east wind swept a fine icy snow through the streets. People shivered, and all who were not compelled to be in the streets in this weather took refuge in warmly heated rooms.

Suddenly—no one could say how it happened—the thick bank of cloud over the south-east of Berlin was rent asunder. A glaring blaze of light was seen in the sky, and for a few seconds the blue heaven appeared.

Many people had seen this strange freak of nature, for so they explained the extraordinary spectacle, and they were more astonished than frightened.

Among the witnesses of this atmospheric marvel were the astronomers of the Treptow Observatory, but they could not explain it. How astonished they were, therefore, when the seismographic apparatus began to oscillate violently, indicating a serious earthquake, and close investigation revealed that this earthquake must have occurred in the immediate vicinity, though curiously enough no tremors had been noticed, nor had the clocks stopped, as always happens when there is an earthquake.

Before people had recovered from their astonishment, the phenomenon recurred. This time it lasted longer and was followed by a complete cessation of all wireless trans-

mission, as had happened three months before. The glare in the sky was accompanied by heavy peals of thunder.

People rushed out of their houses and fled into the open country, staring in horror at the sky.

At intervals of ten minutes the phenomena were repeated. Snow, rain, and hail fell. Then, an hour later, the clouds were torn to shreds, the sky became radiantly blue, the sun drove away the remnants of the clouds, and the temperature rose six degrees in the space of thirty minutes. The roofs dripped with melting snow. The wind had completely dropped. Whereas only an hour before winter had held the land in a firm grip, now spring seemed suddenly to have descended from above.

In the meteorological institutions and observatories the telephone bells rang incessantly. The newspapers sent out reporters in racing cars and on motor-bicycles. The astronomers and meteorological experts were nonplussed.

This change in the weather was a riddle. It would have been too extravagant to talk of human intervention, but this could not be explained scientifically as a natural phenomenon.

According to the meteorological reports which had come in from foreign stations the day before, and according to the observations and calculations which had been made concerning the clouds an hour previous to the incomprehensible occurrence, there had been no indication of any imminent change in the overcast weather conditions. Strangely enough, no change was even now registered by the instruments. Barometers and weather glasses were still very low.

The evening papers spoke of a thunderstorm above the clouds, and air currents coming swiftly and unexpectedly from the south at a great height.

The experts refuted this assumption and sent contradictory explanations to the Press. In the observatories the astronomers were racking their brains over this inexplicable happening.

Those who had least faith in a natural explanation were the radio companies, for the interference with transmission too closely resembled those which had occurred months before.

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

AND still the police continued their search for Aloisia Hacker, Pfleiderer, and Professor Sydney Montford. According to recent reports, the people who were being looked for were now in the United States. Sydney Montford was alleged to have been seen in New York.

As this time wireless interference had also been noticeable in the United States, it did seem possible that Aloisia Hacker and her assistants had migrated to America.

This theory was confirmed when the Graz police seized a letter addressed to Crescentia from Boston. In it Loisi sent the old woman her warmest greetings and consoled her for her long absence.

I shall soon be back in Graz. It can't be long now. It's to be hoped that the stern gentlemen of the law won't send me to prison for life for stealing a domicile and baptism certificate. My guardian is entirely innocent and has done nothing wrong.

Heaps of kisses to my good old Crescentia,
from her crazy girl,
Aloisia Hacker.

Kind regards to both the Mittermaiers, Frau Wurz, and Herr Bindernagel.

The postmark was dated Boston Common, the 4th February.

Crescentia was fined ten schillings for disobeying the police summons and for giving the policeman who

delivered it a disrespectful answer. She was taken to a police station by force.

"So I'm supposed to know where Loisi is ?" the old woman cried. "Well, even if I did I wouldn't tell. What do we pay all these taxes for ? I suppose it's to pay the police, isn't it ? And what are the police for I'd like to know, if they can't find anything out. Where are all the policemen I wonder ?" Crescentia had to be thrust unceremoniously out of the room or she would have gone on raving for hours.

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

OF course detective Hungerl had to take the next steamer for America.

"Now or never!" he swore to himself. "America's a big place, but I'll get them. The name of Hungerl must be made as famous as that mad girl's who has attracted all this notice with her inventions."

Herr Hungerl could never have dreamt that a certain Herr Fritz Moldenhauer sailing in the same ship to America was none other than Pfleiderer. The detective had learned that, three weeks before, a power of attorney had reached Frau Wurz from Malmo with the request to forward money. The document, which had been officially drafted by a lawyer, originated in the Copenhagen consulate.

A telegraphic inquiry from the Graz police headquarters elicited the reply by return of post that the gentleman's papers were completely in order, and as the warrant had been withdrawn there was no excuse for proceeding against him.

Copenhagen detectives at once took up the pursuit of Pfleiderer with a view to discovering Aloisia Hacker's hiding-place. Their efforts were unavailing; the wanted man had vanished from Copenhagen without leaving a trace.

The *Allgemeine Handels-und Gewerbebank* on the Jakomoniplatz paid out the money to Frau Wurz without hesitation, as did also the *Steirer Bank* in the Schmidgasse.

Frau Wurz was well aware that she was being watched, but she had become wary. It did not escape her that

the post was being scrutinized; she was on her guard and burnt all suspicious documents. Although she was repeatedly assured that there was now no warrant of arrest to jeopardize Herr Pfleiderer's safety, she did not allow herself to be led into any rashness. Her adviser was the typist on the third floor. Fräulein Mittermaier was shrewd, and always reflected a long time before she gave advice.

Pfleiderer had enclosed a few lines to Frau Wurz with the power of attorney, telling her to draw the money and be ready to send it to him when he asked for it.

The police knew the contents of the letter and watched the housekeeper's every movement. They were also informed about the sudden friendship with the typist, and guessed that this woman had assisted Pfleiderer's flight.

Crescentia's post also interested the police, but the fruits of long observation were very meagre.

In spite of close scrutiny, they had failed to notice that a letter from Sassnitz had been delivered to Fräulein Mittermaier:

> *Send twenty thousand schillings at once in four plain envelopes to Fritz Moldenhauer, Berlin, S.W.*48 *Friedrichstrasse,* 226, *Poste Restante.*
>
> *Greetings to all.*
>
> *Fritz.*

Fräulein Mittermaier examined the envelope before opening it. She guessed in an instant that the letter was from Pfleiderer, although the address was typed, and no sender's name was on the envelope. It bore no trace of having been forced open. Before opening it, she went to Frau Wurz.

"I've had a letter that can only have come from the Herr Gemeinderat."

"You don't say so!"

"He probably wrote to me because he feels sure his letters to you are being opened."

"Do you really think so?"

"Of course. They're still after him."

"Yes, but what for? Still because of Loisi?"

"Of course. Please lock the door, Frau Wurz, so that no one can surprise us."

"Very well. You never know when the police will drop in. And there's no relying on Kathi and Hanni."

"Well, listen," and Fräulein Mittermaier read the letter out.

"Well, well, the letter isn't from Herr Pfleiderer after all."

"But I think it must be, Frau Wurz. I don't know any Fritz Moldenhauer. Most likely he doesn't want to give his real name."

The housekeeper had Herr Bindernagel on her lap. "Give me the letter; I'd like to see the handwriting."

The dog reached up and sniffed the paper; and as with Loisi's letter in Nice, so this time he scented his master. He passed his nose over the paper, paused at a certain spot, and drew the air in audibly through his nostrils.

"The signature is his. Just look at the dog. He recognizes his master. That settles it."

"How are we going to manage about the money, Frau Wurz?"

"I've still got a few thousand schillings in the house, and to-morrow and the next day I'll get the rest from the bank, as Herr Pfleiderer asks. What I should like to know is what he wants so much money for."

"He has enough, Frau Wurz. He must be giving most of it to Loisi for her experiments."

Two days later Fräulein Mittermaier went to Bruck on the Mur, and there posted a letter to Fritz Moldenhauer. She posted a second at Frohnleiten, a third in Peggau, and a fourth in Gloggnitz. The addresses were typed. Each time she made sure that no one was watching her. With the letter posted in Gloggnitz she enclosed a few lines :

Dear Herr Moldenhauer,

I hope all the letters will reach you safely. If you have anything to tell me, address it to my brother: Vienna, III *Bezirk, Ungargasse,* 12, 11 *Stock, Tür* 16.

Best wishes,

Tomcat.

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

LOISI'S great triumph was to materialize earlier than she had promised her guardian. She and Montford worked unwearyingly through the long winter days, undisturbed.

Only one anxiety weighed upon the girl: lest Montford should get hold of a newspaper which would reveal her sex. She kept a suspicious eye on the papers which old Frau Schneider brought back from her shopping expeditions in Königswusterhausen. She gave up all experiments that entailed interruption of the wireless, and sent no further messages through the air.

If these extraordinary occurrences ceased, the newspapers would keep quiet. She did not realize that her secret had long been known to Montford. He had come upon it accidentally.

During the evening when Loisi had met her guardian, the American, to pass the time, had switched on the loud speaker. He found no pleasure in his work when his young friend was absent. At the end of a wireless play, the announcer said:

"Dresden has just sent a wireless message which throws light on the secret of the wireless interference.

"It has been proved that a girl named Aloisia Hacker of Graz, who more than two years ago entered the Technikum at Untersberg as a pupil after furnishing forged documents, has made an invention which is of far-reaching importance for wireless telegraphy.

"Aloisia Hacker, who calls herself Alois, wears men's

clothes, has close-cropped hair, and is in company with the American scientist, Sydney Montford. It is not known where the pair are living and they are being searched for by the police of all countries. Information likely to lead to their discovery should be forwarded to the nearest police station."

After this, Montford had sat for a long time motionless in his big armchair. A great deal was now made clear. So the little Austrian was a girl! The professor stared before him, brooding. He remembered that the young man always locked his bedroom door at night and never opened it even if he had something to tell him.

So a girl had put all the men of science to shame, a genius dwelt in that slim body! It was difficult for Montford to get used to the new situation. One thing was clear at once: on no account must his friend notice that his carefully guarded secret had leaked out.

So Loisi did not suspect that Montford knew about her sex. She only noticed with surprise that he would jump up to help her whenever she was about to lift anything heavy.

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

LOISI'S inventive gifts were like the marvellous sense of touch of the blind. Her knowledge was great, but whenever there came a hitch in her experiments it was as though an extra brain-cell came into action; an inspiration would flash into her mind, and she always found the right solution in a few days.

To discover the essential nature of electricity, the dream of all researchers, the goal which celebrities like Edison, Marconi, Tesla, and thousands of other geniuses had set themselves, loomed before the mind of Loisi Hacker, that youthful granddaughter of the inventor whose talent she had inherited.

But even she did not really find the solution she was looking for; it was chance, blind fortune which helped her to it.

During the last few years Loisi had greatly improved her miniature accumulators. She had succeeded in constructing a pocket battery which produced fifty horse power for a period of twenty-four hours. With this battery she could have kept a large car running at lightning speed for three days on end.

Under a hermetically sealed glass globe whose walls were two inches thick, she kept her first experimental battery, the tiny accumulator.

One day Montford pointed out to Loisi that clouds had formed in the glass container—clouds such as one sees piled in the sky on rainy days.

Montford feared an explosion. He fetched wire masks

for himself and Loisi, and they took cover behind a strong shield which reached up to their necks.

The spectacle was of extreme interest. The clouds heaved about under the glass roof, rolling hither and thither in search of an outlet. Suddenly a red glare lit the cloud formations, and a tiny blue-white zig-zag flash shot down. This phenomenon was repeated several times, and then the glass walls clouded over and drops of moisture trickled down them.

The spectacle lasted for a minute, and then the clouds vanished and the air over the accumulator cleared.

Loisi now saw her way clear before her. She pierced the glass cover, inserted a tube, and hermetically sealed the edges. The tubes she connected with a distiller. Between were measuring instruments.

By means of this apparatus she succeeded in analysing that electric fluid which Benjamin Franklin had vainly tried to explain by the single-fluid theory of electrical phenomena, reducing it to its constituent parts, and measuring its force.

The sheaf of fire which radiated from the massed clouds of the electric field went through the tube, passing on the way the measuring instrument, and reached the complicated distilling apparatus, which on the basis of earlier experience was constructed according to the system of electrolytic diffusion.

The point was to separate the electric eddies into their constituent parts by means of the apparatus. The limited specific inductive capacity which the physicist Faraday had established was made infinite by regulated discharges.

The molecules which were torn free by the shock, Loisi caught before they were discharged. In these bodies, invisible to the human eye, lay the essence of electricity, and with a cry of triumph Loisi flung her

arms round Montford's neck and, throwing all caution to the winds, shook him and cried:

"I've got it!"

He breathed heavily as she clung to him.

Loisi rushed back to the apparatus and set feverishly to work.

What the clever inventress had discovered was that the unequal speed of the molecules dashed them with varying force against the electrodes and caused the released gases in the space to explode.

The inward nature of artificially produced electricity which depends on friction was more difficult to solve than that of the electric streams eternally moving in the cosmos.

Reduced to its invisible component parts, the formula was now definitely recorded on paper. Montford had to admit that science had not only achieved a great triumph, but that the whole manner of life, production, growth, and outward form of the earth and its inhabitants, the whole cosmos, was revolutionized by Loisi's discovery.

The first test of the struggle against the forces of nature was made by Loisi on that dreary February day. She had trebled the strength of her transmitter, mingled its waves with those of the great station at Königswusterhausen, and projected the stream into the ether.

From the platform of their tower, Montford and Loisi had watched this terrific artificial scattering of the clouds, from the grandiose moment when the massed cumuli shone purple in the heavens to that when the sun broke through victorious and illuminated the earth.

Loisi realized that she was the conqueror of earth and air.

The forces of nature should be further exploited by

means of artificial electric currents and brought to the service of mankind.

Pfleiderer received a wireless message to furnish the further funds which were necessary to bring about the great final achievement.

"Herr Professor," said Loisi to Montford, "you must make me an oxygen cylinder, light and at the same time capable of renewing breathed air and making it fit to breathe again. I must see where I can get a parachute which will save me from a crash if the apparatus fails."

The American stared at Loisi in astonishment.

"What are you thinking of ?"

"You'll see in three or four days' time. I'm going to fly, have myself carried through the ether by the wireless waves."

"What ! What do you say ? You intend to risk your life, your life so valuable to the world, in this foolhardy way ?"

"Don't worry. Nothing will happen to me. First I'm going to try with a package the same weight as my body."

Loisi shut herself up for three days in her workshop, appearing only at meals.

"We can try it out to-night, Herr Professor."

The night was clear and cold when Loisi asked Montford to help her haul the big elongated package up to the platform.

"The whole thing weighs 140 lbs," she replied to Montford's question.

"But that's much more than your weight."

"It's got to be. I have to reckon in the weight of the apparatus and parachute when I want to fly myself."

"Are you really still thinking of this mad scheme ?" There was a quiver in his voice. He was anxious about her. Since he had known she was a girl, she had moved

farther away from him, become stranger; a certain timidity towards her had taken possession of him.

"You see these inductors, Herr Professor? The current of our transmitter must be strong enough to lift this load at least three hundred meters into the air if we are to get it into the waves of the big station."

He examined the armature and saw that the glass plates had been replaced by porcelain, and the metal parts protected by vulcanite covers. The coils and magnets were invisible and were connected with the air only by Bergmann, the only really watertight, tubes. Automatic switches were fitted opposite the magnets.

"You mean to say you've made all that in these four days?"

Loisi laughed, and her white teeth gleamed in the dark.

"Most of it was ready long ago; it was only mounting it that took up any time to speak of. But now, Professor, let's start the Diesel motors and dynamos, and try it out. Will you please help me lift the package on to the stand?"

"I can manage it better by myself."

"No, no. I'll help, or something may happen. It's too heavy for one man."

Montford could not suppress a smile at the word *man*.

Motors and dynamos began to hum and blue sparks flew up from the transmitter. Hour after hour passed, and Loisi could not manage to get the heavy bundle into the air. She turned screws, slackened the shock-absorbers, tightened them again, and was untiringly busy.

Montford helped in everything. It was his sincere hope that the experiment would not succeed, lest Loisi should be tempted to venture the same experiment with her own person.

"Now! now, Herr Professor!" Loisi cried as the

package rose, turned in the air, then righted itself, and began to shoot upward.

With one bound, Loisi was at the steering-apparatus pulling levers over. The screen in which the landscape surrounding the villa was reflected was illuminated by an Osram lamp, and Loisi was able to steer the 140 lb. load soaring through the air at will.

Montford followed with astonishment the flying body so far as his eye could do so. He looked from the plate to the firmament, and he was seized by a secret awe of this girl whose radiant face flitted about over the apparatus.

"But how are you going to get that heavy thing down without smashing it to pieces?"

"Just see that the dynamos keep going. Here; now hold this lever, Herr Professor."

He seized it and sent the package circling over the park.

Loisi tore the cover from the spring stand, threw a rubber mat over it, and pushed a table, a transmitter, and the television apparatus out of the way. Then she started a small motor which was mounted under the stand and got ready two big electro-magnets beside it.

"Will you see that the load comes to rest exactly on the rubber mat."

Once more she made the indicator turn a complete circle, then she shut off the transmitter. The current-reducer slipped slowly from one terminal to another. The whistling in the air died away, and the package sank swaying downwards and at last struck violently on the springs.

"Thank God!" cried Loisi when all the machinery was at rest.

An examination of the great package revealed that despite the cold night air it had become very hot. The

wires of the magnets were aglow, and a smell of burning rubber was noticeable.

"Just in time," said Montford.

Some of the interior connections had been destroyed, and had Loisi delayed a few seconds longer, the package would have burst into flames and crashed.

"Now I know the defects. Help me to put them right."

"I'm always at your service, Mr. Hacker."

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

LOISI'S meeting with her guardian was to take place this time in the Café Wien on the Kurfürstendamm.

Walking along this thoroughfare, Loisi suddenly saw approaching her a face she knew well.

It was the student Schramm, who had sat with her during her first term in the lecture room and slept in that same dormitory which for some months Loisi had shared with nineteen of her students. Schramm stared at Loisi, who quickly turned up the collar of her coat and pulled her hat down over her eyes. The young man stopped in front of the girl, stretched out his hand, and cried:

"Hacker, old man! . . . Oh, I beg your pardon, *Gnädiges Fräulein*. . . ."

Without replying, Loisi walked round the man who was barring her way and passed on.

Schramm looked after her for a moment. The snub was a bit too thick. His brain was working hard. This girl was wanted by the police. The reward did not tempt him, for he was the son of wealthy parents. If the young idiot had stopped he would have held his tongue. An incident at Untersberg recurred to his mind. During a rag in the gymnasium, he had once seized Loisi from behind, lifted her up, and laid her on the ground. She had jumped up in a fury and punched Schramm's face so that a black eye and swollen nose had subjected him for a fortnight to the jeers of his fellow students.

Loisi was striding hurriedly along the Kurfürstendamm. At the corner of the Fasanenstrasse a car was standing

with its door still open. A man was just paying off the driver. Without thinking what she was doing, Loisi jumped in, calling to the driver, "Götlitzer station". As she did so she seemed to hear a call of "Loisi!" Panic-stricken, she called to the driver through the open pane:

"Drive up the Uhlandstrasse! Hurry!"

It was to be hoped the student would not follow her. She turned her head, and through the little oval window saw a line of cars filling the broad street. Then she sighted Schramm, leaning out of the side window of a taxi, calling something to the driver and signing ahead with his hand.

Another car nosed its way between the two taxis.

At the corner of the Uhlandstrasse the traffic lamp allowed Loisi's car and the one behind it to pass, but Schramm's was pulled up.

Loisi had not been mistaken when she had thought she heard her name. It was not, however, Schramm, but Pfleiderer, who had just got out of the taxi in which Loisi was now sitting. He had had his back turned to her while paying the driver, and in her panic at the sight of Schramm she had not paused to look at the man in the grey raglan who was standing by her.

Pfleiderer thought something must be amiss. He ran to a car which was standing in the Fasanenstrasse, and as he did so noticed a young man in front of him also get into a taxi and call to the driver:

"Follow that car. Don't let it out of sight."

"Overtake that taxi in front of you and I'll give you a good tip," Pfleiderer cried to his chauffeur.

In the traffic block, Pfleiderer's car pushed its way between Schramm's and Loisi's.

When the traffic lamp set the street free again, Schramm's driver went along the Kurfürstendamm instead of turning into the Uhlandstrasse. The student hammered with his

fist on the window and shouted to the man at the wheel:

"Where the devil are you going? I showed you the car you were to follow!"

"But there it is," the man answered, pointing to a big red car.

"No, it isn't. I meant a taxi which turned into the Uhlandstrasse. Turn round quick. We've got to find that taxi!"

"I can't turn here; I'll have to drive as far as the Knesebeckstrasse."

"Get on with it then, get on!"

In the Uhlandstrasse there was no trace of Loisi's taxi. Whenever Schramm's car overtook another, he peered inside, to see only strange faces. He stopped the car in front of a policeman, asked for the nearest police station, drove there, and reported what he had seen.

Loisi's panic increased when she noticed that the car behind was still following hers.

At the Hohenzollerndamm she told her driver to turn left. At the corner of the Kaiserallee and Berlinerstrasse they were held up by a traffic signal. Even had the driver wanted to cross the street it would have been impossible. Loisi saw with horror the other car pull up behind her and its door open. Her only chance was to make a dash for it. She pulled out of her pocket a note covering the fare five times over, jumped out of the car, threw the money to the driver, and was about to dash between the cars, when an arm seized her.

"Are you quite mad? Where are you off to?"

Loisi was on the point of fainting.

"Come into my taxi," said Pfleiderer. Swaying, she followed him, and the line of cars was again set in motion.

Staring, almost insane, was the look Loisi turned upon her guardian.

"It's you, you, Guardian? Where have you come from? And I thought it was Schramm after me."

She wiped the perspiration from her brow. Her face was deathly pale.

"Who is Schramm? The young fellow who drove after you?"

"Yes, did you see him then?"

"Yes, but I only guessed he was following you. He disappeared along the Kurfürstendamm. He was held up."

"Thank Heaven! Suppose he had caught me! The police would have taken me at once and then it would have been all up with everything. Just as I've got the invention nearly finished.

"But who was the fellow?"

"A student from Untersberg who recognized me. And he's not likely to have much good to say of me. I once punched his face."

"Splendid. What are we to do now?"

"Schramm is sure to tell the police. Did he notice you following me?"

"No, he can't have any idea. All his attention was devoted to you."

"We'll have to buy another coat and hat for me to wear, for I'm quite certain Schramm will have given a description of me."

"And to-day of all days! Have you read the papers? The radio and wireless telegraph service were blocked again last night. There's a reward of fifty thousand marks upon your head."

Pfleiderer took out a paper, *Die Stumdennachrichten*, which turned out twenty-four editions in the day. The front page gave the news of Aloisia Hacker's latest interference with wireless transmission. It was now certain that her apparatus was causing the disturbances. Printed in heavy

headlines, was the sum of fifty thousand marks offered for the seizure of Aloisia Hacker or discovery of the secret station. The notice was supported by a bad photograph representing Loisi in a white confirmation dress.

"No one will recognize you from that," said Pfleiderer.

In the doorway in the Zimmerstrasse, Loisi put on the coat which Pfleiderer had bought for her at Hoffmanns in the Friedrichstrasse. She could see from the doorway that motor-cyclist police were stopping and examining all passing taxis.

"They're after me, Guardian."

"Now keep calm. I'll buy you a hat as well. That grey hat is too easily recognizable. What's the size ?"

"Seven, I think."

"Good. Come on ; we mustn't take a taxi yet."

Passing along the Nauerstrasse, they reached the Leipziger Strasse. It was getting dark, and the electric signs were shining down on passers-by on the pavements.

After buying a new cap, Loisi felt a little easier in her mind.

In the furnished room in the Wilhelmstrasse, Pfleiderer listened to Loisi's instructions. He was to go at once to America to buy some special articles for his ward. He must be back in three or four weeks at the latest. He was to insert an inconspicuous notice in the eight o'clock evening paper.

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

BERLIN was in a state of tumult.

At the police station in the Pfalzburgerstrasse, Schramm had reported his encounter with Aloisia Hacker and the flight in taxi No. 426809.

The message was forwarded by telephone to police headquarters.

A few minutes later five hundred motor-cyclist police swept out of the police barracks in the Blücherstrasse. Traffic was held up for twenty minutes while they roared off in every direction.

All mobile police units were given the alarm and set in movement. The taxi-drivers cursed; cars were held up in long lines. All were searched. Not until two hours after the alarm was taxi No. 426809 discovered. It was in the fourth yard of the building Lindenstrasse 3. The driver was roused from his sleep to no purpose.

"Where's the young man?"

"What young man?"

"The fare you brought here."

"I don't know. Why, this building 'as got eight or ten floors. Do you suppose my fares tell me where they're going?"

"Did he go in that way?" the policeman asked, pointing to the entrance.

"Oh, no; he climbed up the lightning conductor!"

Four policemen dashed up the stairs. Most of the offices—there were only a big printing works and editorial offices in the rear building—were already closed.

A slim young man was coming down from the fourth floor. He was considerably startled when uniformed police suddenly appeared on the stairs and one covered him with a revolver, shouting :

"Put up your hands ! Come along down ; it's no good resisting !"

With a quick movement, the man turned and dashed up the stairs, the police at his heels.

"Stop or we'll shoot !"

But they did not get him until the seventh floor.

"Come along !" one of the police said. "You're only making things worse for yourself."

Reluctantly, and with raised hands, the man approached. A pair of handcuffs were at once slipped on his wrists.

"Where have you been ?"

"Up in the night editor's office."

"Have you any accomplices up there ?"

The man did not reply.

"Come up with us."

In the office the man was not known. He had been up a few minutes before, and had wanted to sell a piece of news for the morning edition.

"It was of no interest and no use to us," said the sleepy night-editor.

Before the policemen could get the young man they had arrested into the taxi, the night-watchman came running breathlessly down from the eighth floor. He began to stammer when he saw the police with their capture.

"Have you got the blackguard ? The blighter locked me in and rifled the safe. He must have seen you from the window and tried to get away."

At the police station the officers learned that they had caught, not the Aloisia Hacker they were looking for, but a burglar who had long been wanted.

The police sweep, which lasted all night, did not achieve the desired result. Many people known to the police were captured, but no trace was found of Aloisia Hacker.

Nor did the watch kept on the railway stations fare any better.

It was rather a disaster for the police that during the great search three motor-bicycles were stolen from them.

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

ON a stolen police motor-cycle, Loisi was dashing through the dark streets of Mariendorf. She had to get to Königswusterhausen by a roundabout way, circling the towns so that she should not be seen.

It was two in the morning before she reached the Notte. She pushed the cycle into the middle of the river and sank it there. Then she walked back to the bank and obliterated the trail as well as she could.

Shivering with cold, she reached the villa in her wet clothes and crept cautiously past the porter's lodging. It was to be hoped that Montford would not wake up. He must not see her in this state. Her fears were justified. The American was waiting for her. He was horrified at her appearance.

"What on earth has happened to you? You look like death, and your clothes are all wet and muddy. Have you been followed?"

She shook her head. Her limbs were trembling, her lips twitching.

"I'll get you a glass of mulled wine; change your clothes."

It cost Loisi a great effort to get off her wet clothes and dress again. She swallowed greedily the hot drink the professor brought, and asked for a second.

"It'll go to your head," he warned her.

"Oh, no, it won't. I don't want to be ill now. I mustn't be, Herr Professor."

"What happened? Have you been followed here?"

She shook her head and smiled; the wine was having its effect.

"Not as far as here. Only in Berlin. I have to thank my guardian that I wasn't arrested."

She related what had happened.

He watched her. The riddle of this girl was puzzling him more and more.

"And I've become . . . I've become a thief."

He stared at her.

"I've stolen a motor-bicycle; a police motor-bicycle! I couldn't have got away without. The whole of Berlin is on our heels, Herr Professor. They've set a reward of fifty thousand marks on my head."

"And you've stolen a police motor-cycle! Have you left it below in the grounds?"

"No, I'm not such a fool as that. I sank it in the river."

"Couldn't you have come by train?"

"No, that would have been dangerous, and I didn't want to stay the night in Berlin either. There were two motor-bicycles standing in front of a house in the Belle-Alliance-Strasse. I saw the police go in. There was no one near. Without thinking what I was doing, I got on to one and rode off. I've come here by a very roundabout way."

"Thank God they didn't get you!"

"We'll have to stop using the wireless waves for the present, Herr Professor. Some day we'll take it up again, unless you'd rather avoid the risk and leave me."

Her cheeks were flushed by the wine. All the young man in her had gone. Anyone seeing her at this moment would have guessed her sex.

"I'll stay here unless you want me to go. You don't take me for a coward?"

"Heaven forbid, Herr Professor. I didn't mean to hurt you."

"I know. Let me go on working with you."

She got up. The whole room seemed to reel about her. As though through a veil, she saw the man she secretly loved. She had to summon all her self-command to prevent herself from throwing her arms round him.

Montford sensed what was going on inside her. He offered Loisi his hand.

"That's all right; and now go to bed. We can fix up our plans for the future to-morrow."

CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

HUNGERL would have been Pfleiderer's neighbour at table on board the liner, had not the latter decided at the last moment to say a word to the head steward and secure a place in the opposite corner of the dining-saloon.

The Vienna detective frequently walked past Pfleiderer, without the slightest idea that the wanted man was beside him.

The detective was not so much interested in Aloisia Hacker's guardian as in the ward and the professor. The capture of these two was his objective.

Every day wireless messages were received by the ship.

Only once was there mention of wireless disturbances. It was reported that Schramm's statement was based on a mistake. Aloisia Hacker's trail seemed to lead in the direction of the United States. The pair had been seen in New York, Pittsburg, Detroit, and Kansas City. During the last few days there had even been attempts at wireless interference. The meteorologists imputed these to sun-spots, but the sensation-loving Press would not accept their opinion.

On arrival in Hoboken, Hungerl allowed himself to be interviewed and photographed. The reporters wanted to find out from him all about the Hacker-Montford affair.

Hungerl said what he thought was proper, and assured the newspaper men that he would get both the criminals.

Pfleiderer left the ship unobserved, and three hours later was seated in the Century Flyer, which took him in fourteen hours to Columbus.

Within three weeks he had completed all the purchases Loisi wanted, and had had the special articles made. He sailed for Europe by the next ship.

CHAPTER FORTY-NINE

IT was only ten days before Hungerl discovered a definite clue to the whereabouts of the fugitives.

The *New York Times* reported that a couple in Long Island had been attracting attention by mysterious activities, and had suddenly disappeared when the police began to watch them. The town and state police, and Pinkerton's detective agency, who were on their trail found the nest in Saghurst empty. On the roof of this lonely house a strange type of aerial was fixed. Behind the house were discovered débris of charred wood, melted vulcanite, and metal and porcelain gadgets which had been damaged by fire.

Hungerl followed these suspects from town to town, deliberately setting the other pursuers on false trails. He intended to bag the quarry alone and had no intention of arresting them in the United States, where he had no authority. His calculations proved accurate.

After being hounded through the United States for two months, the pair took ship at Seattle on a salmon steamer, booking a passage through the Panama Canal to Europe.

Hungerl had to charter an aeroplane to catch the ship in Panama City.

Once more the pair had slipped through his fingers. They had left the ship at Frisco and travelled through the States to New York, where they sailed in the *Aquitania* three days before Hungerl arrived there. He followed in the next steamer.

In Hamburg he had no difficulty in tracing them. They

had put up at the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten, and had left almost immediately.

A few casual words had brought Hungerl's mission to the notice of the Press, which reported the months of tireless pursuit and the self-sacrifice of the famous Vienna detective, who was now on the heels of his quarry and expecting hourly to arrest them.

Twenty-four hours later, Hungerl was able to lay hands on the fugitives and hand them over to the nearest police station.

He did not allow himself to be turned from his purpose by their protests or by the documents they showed him.

It was a bitter pill for Hungerl to learn that he had caught a pair of dancing-partners out for publicity.

Joe and Kitty Delaney had come to the end of their tether on the American halls. Their dance numbers were played out, and the managers would not consider the high salary they demanded.

It was Kitty who conceived the idea of posing with her partner as the wanted couple, Aloisia Hacker and Sydney Montford. They did not bear the slightest resemblance to these two, but they were not actors for nothing. They had little difficulty in making themselves up to look like the couple after whom there was all this hue and cry.

The idea was at once translated into action, and soon they learned through the papers of the pertinacious Austrian detective. It was Kitty herself, through acquaintances in the know, who egged Hungerl on in his pursuit. These intermediaries also kept the newspapers fed with reports of the latest movements of the pair and their pursuer.

When Hungerl handed over his captives in the Alexanderplatz, Kitty and Joe Delaney protested vigorously against their arrest. Just as the reporters were busy taking notes

of the occurrence, a policeman rushed into the room, shouting :

"There's someone, a living person, flying over Berlin. There's no aeroplane and no machine at all !"

The police commissioner looked sternly at him, annoyed at this lapse of discipline.

"Look here, Lehman ; what's come over you ?"

"But the whole town is in an uproar, sir. All the traffic's held up. There's been a whole heap of accidents. People are standing in the streets in crowds. Everything's come to a standstill ; shops and factories left empty. The pickpockets and burglars must be having the time of their lives."

"Have you seen this flyer ?"

"Of course. Just now ; flying over the Alexanderplatz."

"It's Aloisia Hacker !"

It was Hungerl who ejaculated these words. He turned to the dancers.

"Very clever ! Very clever ! You'll get your publicity all right. You'll make your expenses a thousand times over.

"I'm responsible, *Herr Kriminal Kommissar*. We've nothing on these two. I'm sorry."

CHAPTER FIFTY

LOISI had embarked on her first ride through the air. This was the fulfilment of all her dreams.

Three months before, Pfleiderer had brought back from America an asbestos suit, some small oxygen-cylinders, and a few special gadgets, in addition to an entirely novel type of parachute.

Loisi and Montford had rigged up the new flying equipment on suspending straps. Resistances were fitted into the asbestos suit. They were to keep the body warm in the air. The contacts were to be carried in front, on the body. All the switches were visible and all the covering water-tight. On the crash helmet, over the lightning-conductor, projected octagonal framework aerial. Wires in vulcanite tubes ran along the outside of the suit and hung from the stout rubber overshoes into the air. The telephone was mounted on the left sleeve.

Loisi had been busy day and night, and when her guardian returned from America the apparatus was almost ready.

It was another two months before she solved the problem of launching herself from some raised position into the waves of the great transmitter and rising into the air.

The apparatus fitted to the flight-suit had easily-manipulated gadgets which allowed the flyer, according to the readings of a measuring instrument, to switch over from one wave-length to another.

In case all radio stations should stop their engines and

break off transmission, the parachute provided adequate protection against a crash.

This parachute, a recent American invention, was so constructed as to open automatically without any outside aid as soon as the flyer had fallen fifty meters.

The flying equipment had sixty-two keys, which Loisi was continually testing on the ground. Whenever one failed, both the inventors worked continuously at it until it functioned again.

Montford had asked Loisi to allow him to make the first attempt. He was afraid that an accident might befall her, that the suit might be destroyed in flight through short-circuiting or some unforeseen atmospheric condition, and Loisi be hurled to the ground.

She would not yield.

"So far God has not forsaken me, and he'll stand by me this time too."

"*Let man not tempt the gods.*"

"My dear Professor. The dream is coming true. Let me make the first flight, and then I'll gladly agree to what you want."

Montford's nervousness increased. Spring had come over the land, and everywhere trees, bushes, and meadows were sprouting and blossoming.

The day, or rather the night, had come when Loisi had decided to make her first attempt.

She had promised Montford to remain visible in the air over the fields for not more than five minutes, and to flash little signal-lights every thirty seconds. In addition she would try to telephone.

The only danger lay in the possibility that the waves of the great transmitters in the ether might prove too powerful and put Loisi's apparatus out of action.

At ten o'clock that night, Loisi stood all ready on the

tower platform. She had fifty of the powerful little batteries of her own invention attached to her belt.

Montford held her firmly by the shoulders while she tested all the keys one after the other.

"I weigh eighty-four kilos with the equipment, Herr Professor. Everything is working splendidly. That's it; now I'm disconnected. Will you please see whether the Königswusterhausen station is working at full power—250 ampères."

The professor ran to the apparatus under the projecting roof and switched on the ammeter.

"Yes, full power; 250 ampères."

"You might help me climb on to the balustrade."

He lifted her with both arms, placed her on the broad rail of the platform, and held her tight. His arms were trembling. Something he had never conceived became clear to him at this moment.

He, who hitherto had never experienced any warmth of feeling for a member of the opposite sex, now knew that he loved this girl, whose knees he held embraced.

"I'm switching on the magnets, Professor. Don't forget to see that there's nothing in the way when I come down. Please flash the little hand lamp upwards so that I shan't miss my landing."

"All right, all right." His voice was hoarse. "I'll see to everything."

"In four minutes connect our apparatus. That will make it easier for me to land."

"All right; I will."

"Look out, Professor. I'm switching on. Let go. It's quarter-past nine. Let go."

As though lifted by some invisible power, Loisi soared into the air. Her body sank forward, the weight of the apparatus forcing her from the vertical.

"God protect her!" came like a moan from Montford's lips.

Loisi pressed key after key and, at a speed of five hundred kilometers per hour, she flew through the air. She felt a roaring in her ears and the air swept icily past her face.

The little lamp on her breast lit up the armature. She flew away over Königswusterhausen, switched into wave-length 900 from England, and immediately afterwards heard on wave-length 750 the Scala orchestra in Milan. She forgot that she had promised Montford only to cruise over the fields. She was already flying over Berlin. Millions of lights shone below her. Intoxicated by the spectacle, she hardly noticed the discomfort of her almost horizontal position. She tightened the straps to prevent the apparatus from slipping too far towards her head, for otherwise she might have lost her balance and her control over the keys. Every single key was obeying her pressure and carrying out its allotted function.

At last she remembered that she had promised to call Montford up by telephone. She lifted the receiver and switched on the little transmitter, after connecting battery "four". She tried to speak, to shout, but the force of the rushing air drove the words from her lips. The stop-watch showed her that three and a half minutes had already passed since the start. She steered over the waves of the Boxhaus, and transferred to the Königswusterhausen station. At terrific speed she flew over the east of Berlin, dodging an aeroplane before it had a chance to notice her. Her face began to smart painfully. At last she saw the Königswusterhausen wireless tower. She had cut through the air at a speed of 2,000 kilometers per hour. She looked for the house in the park, flashed her signal lamp twice, reduced the current of the magnets,

and sank slowly a hundred meters. Using the change-over switch, she transferred to the waves of her own transmitter. But her attempt to approach the tower platform failed. Four times she tried, and each time had to set the magnets going again to regain height. At the fifth attempt she brushed against the balustrade. Montford seized her in his arms and switched off the magnets. Both fell to the floor.

Stunned a little by the fall, Montford forced himself from under Loisi, who lay unconscious on the platform.

The professor quickly stopped all the motors and dynamos, then sprang to Loisi, unfastened the apparatus from her body, and to his horror saw that her face was covered with blood and that she had lost consciousness.

He carried her in his arms down to the big living-room, laid her on the sofa, freed her from the heavy flying gear, and pulled off the asbestos suit below it.

Then he brought a basin of water from the bathroom and carefully washed the blood from her face. The skin of her forehead and cheeks was broken in many places, and her chin and lips were also lacerated.

After he had wiped away the blood, he carefully smeared vaseline over the wounds with a linen rag.

It was some considerable time before Loisi came to herself. She was very startled when she saw Montford kneeling beside the couch.

Her first thought was that he would now have discovered that she was a girl.

He guessed what was passing through her mind, and was anxious to relieve her at once.

"How do you feel, Mr. Hacker? Better?"

She wrinkled her brow, and tried to reach it with her hand. Montford seized her fingers.

"Don't touch, Herr Hacker. Your hands are dirty.

You must have flown at terrific speed. The air has torn the skin of your face to shreds.

Loisi smiled, although it caused her severe pain.

"Oh, Herr Professor, it was wonderful, magnificent. But I'll have to have weights on my shoes next time or I'll be standing on my head."

CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE

THE first of May had come, but winter was making preparation for a final flourish.

The lords of the universe, the sun, moon, and great planets, had generated a chaos of air currents by means of the eternal maze of electric streams which cross one another uninterruptedly above the region of the air, and these allowed little light and warmth to pierce through.

The sky was constantly overcast. It rained and hailed, or snowed.

Loisi had fixed upon the first of May as the day for her demonstration flight over Berlin, all Germany, and the whole of Europe. She intended to get into the air suddenly at noon, so that no one should have any idea where she came from, and to be back at nightfall.

She had worked out her flying route.

She would cross Berlin, fly over Pomerania and the Baltic, and then, from Sweden, go on over the other Scandinavian countries.

Montford was to keep the telephone receiver constantly to his ear, never take his eyes off the other communication apparatus and instruments, and try to follow the flight with the television apparatus.

Loisi's face was healed, and now her helmet carried a protecting face mask which would give the cold and tremendous air pressure no chance this time to tear her skin. Lead weights were fastened to the boots to keep the body upright, and protecting plates of thin flat steel covered the shoulders.

The apparatus was this time so fastened that there would be no possibility at all of its slipping forward or downward. The maps were placed by the right hip under a thick magnifying glass and comprised a set of easily visible charts which could be revolved on rollers. The switches were fastened on the breast. From the left hip hung a little lead box with a thermophore, from which a thin tube passed under the face mask. The flask contained a fluid food which would satisfy hunger and thirst. In addition, Loisi was to take a few slabs of chocolate.

The possibility of a forced landing had been provided for. If the switches or wireless waves failed, the automatic parachute would come into use. If a landing below the level of the waves became necessary, Loisi intended, supposing she were flying over flat country, to head as quickly as possible for a mountainous area where she could come down within the transmission zone.

The professor's duties were not confined to doing what he could to follow Loisi's flight; his main function was to receive the radio of all stations and hear what people were saying about it.

Loisi did not reflect that her feminine christian name, and thence her sex might be betrayed.

At last the two American oxygen-cylinders and the parachute were fixed to Loisi's back.

"Hadn't we better clear the sky, Herr Hacker?" the professor asked.

"Not at once. I want to get out of sight above the clouds as fast as I can. People mustn't know where I've started from, and I want to rise quickly enough to prevent them finding out whether the object moving in the air is alive or not.

"Then it's settled, Herr Professor, that I get into touch with you from time to time. Often I shan't be able to,

as I mean to jam transmission in each country as I pass over, and drop little messages. I shan't be back before nine or ten to-night."

"Mr. Hacker"—the professor's eyes rested on her face—"don't overdo anything. You haven't found out yet whether the apparatus can stand up to such a long trip. You'll be under way for nine or ten hours, and you don't know what risks you may be running."

"My dear Professor, the good God has not deserted me up to now and He won't to-day. Don't forget; five minutes after I go up, you must split the clouds and make a clear sky."

"Yes, yes, but you'll stay over us, or at any rate turn back before you start on the long trip?"

"I'm going south first, and I want you to clear the clouds first over the centre and west of Berlin, so that they won't discover our hiding-place. Then I'll switch on the magnets."

Loisi pulled down the mask and fixed the blue glasses over her eyes.

"Look out, Professor!" came a muffled voice from under the mask.

The rubber-covered gloves worked the keys. The indicator of the measuring instrument rotated. Loisi rose a few meters slowly through the trees, depressed the accelerator, shot upwards like a projectile, and a second later had disappeared in the lowering clouds.

CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO

IN the Friedrichstrasse, people were rushing for shelter into the entrances of houses, storming motor buses, trams and taxis.

All looked up with horror in their eyes.

Over the west of Berlin was being enacted the same spectacle that had been seen months before over the south-east, only with the difference that this time a much more vivid fiery glare darted through and rent the clouds, and that this time the phenomenon lasted four minutes. Everyone thought the judgment day had come.

The fires in the sky spread and clove the clouds asunder also over the north, then the east, and finally the south. A cloudburst of rain swept down ; terrific peals of thunder made the air tremble, and a hurricane roared over the roofs.

Five minutes later, the sun was blazing out of a May sky. Clouds, lightning, flames, rain, and storm had ceased with terrifying suddenness.

Panic-stricken, people ran into the street. They did not trust this cloudless sky. This golden sun with its blistering rays was driving away the last cloud masses, which could now be seen scurrying away in the distance.

Then suddenly a cry swept through Berlin, a cry of amazed horror smote every ear. The people had lost control, seemed to have gone out of their minds. They rushed yelling through the streets, bumping into and trampling over one another, heedless of danger from the traffic.

"A man, a man ! There's a living man flying up there !"

On all the roofs, at every window, necks were craned, heads turned. These curious people forgot that they might fall and be shattered on the pavements.

"A flying man! A flying man!"

The cry spread quicker than any radio.

All work, all traffic came to a standstill within a few minutes.

In the big open squares, people thronged, in the gardens and parks they stood in thousands staring at the sky.

The first news to reach Berlin that a living being was flying towards Berlin without the aid of a machine came from Dobriluk-Kirchhain.

The news had not yet spread when Loisi appeared over the south of Berlin.

The second and third announcements came from Grossbeeren and Teltow. He was flying over Lichterfelde-Ost, Südende and Mariendorf.

In the Tempelhofer aerodrome two airmen started up their machines ready to get a close view of the Icarus and follow him.

But before the propellers were even started, Loisi flew over the aerodrome, crossed Friedrichstadt, and over the Alexanderplatz threw down a weighted note.

The paper fell in front of the stores. Thousands of hands stretched out. A free fight ensued. Tietz's display windows were smashed, and many people were injured.

Like men possessed, they fought and pushed to get hold of the paper.

The police reserve were hurried up from the Präsidium and from the police barracks in the Münzstrasse. They drove back the raging mobs with their rubber truncheons and seized the message from the air.

"Read it out!" shouted a fat vegetable hawker.

"Read it out! Read it out! Read it out!" sounded from all sides, and in a flash the police were surrounded and hemmed in by the throng.

How it happened the policeman himself did not know, but suddenly he was standing on the top of an omnibus.

"There, look; there he is again!" people shouted suddenly, pointing upwards.

All stretched their necks and stared at the sky.

In the clear sunlight soared the mysterious being, moving hands and legs to make it clear that he was alive and not a gas-filled puppet.

The roar of a powerful engine was heard, and high over the track of the Stadtbahn an aeroplane was sighted approaching at great speed. The flying figure shot up like a rocket, made off westward, and in a few seconds was lost to view.

Then people remembered the policeman on the bus, but he was no longer to be seen. Mounted police rode over the square and cleared a way for the traffic, which had long been held up.

But it was not only in the north-east of Berlin that people were gesticulating like madmen; it was the same in the north. In the west, where the highbrows live, and imagine they have a monopoly of brains and intelligence, people were behaving in the same way. Everywhere were upturned faces, hysterical shrieking women, trembling men.

Here, as everywhere else, all traffic came to a standstill, and tens of thousands packed the roadways. No one would budge. Cursing car drivers were howled down and roughly handled if they tried to steer their vehicles through the people.

Purses, watches, and note-cases vanished. But no one paid any heed. All eyes were fixed on the sky.

"Look out! There he is over the Zoo, over the Gedächtniskirche." Further and further the cry spread.

Men's necks were aching.

High in the upper regions of the air, Loisi flew, followed in the distance by two aeroplanes.

Excitement rose to frenzy.

Telescopes and field-glasses were torn from the eyes of their owners in the attempt to get a closer view of the flyer.

Hysterical people fought, while others confined themselves to abuse instead of sticks and fists.

Near the Olivaer Platz one of the aeroplanes quickly closed the mysterious flyer, but the latter shot upwards and in a few seconds was out of sight.

People remained long standing on the squares and streets. It was a considerable time before they could recover from their astonishment and terror. Slowly and absently they went on their way.

In bars, restaurants, and coffee houses, waiters stormed and cursed, most of the customers having neglected to pay their bills. Wireless transmission was interrupted from all stations. It was found necessary to revert to the old cables and telephone wires. The aeroplanes returned without having achieved anything; the flyer they had been pursuing had suddenly soared to such heights that they, unprovided with oxygen-apparatus, had had to give up the attempt to reach him.

Once more Loisi appeared over Berlin.

She was sighted over the Stettiner station. At dizzy speed she drove northward.

It was almost impossible for the eye to follow her flight.

CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE

A FEELING of triumphant joy filled the girl from Graz as she shot up like an arrow through the sunny ether.

To be mistress of the skies; mistress of the mysterious electro-magnetic forces of the universe!

With the mouthpiece of the oxygen-apparatus at her lips, Loisi let herself be carried to a height of over ten thousand meters. She was whirled round in circles, but never for a moment lost her presence of mind.

After a few seconds she regained control of the apparatus and switched over from the artificial, to the natural, electric currents. Only now did she see from her measuring instrument that in the airless space above the air-strata of the earth electricity replaced the ozone. Every law of nature which men have fathomed was here suspended. There was no law of gravity. Any object possessing weight hung in space wherever it was released.

Loisi switched off all her apparatus for a moment. Her body remained in the same position, without dropping in the slightest. In fact the reverse was rather the case. Slowly, like a gas-filled balloon, her body rose and continued to rise, doubling, trebling its speed, until finally it was rushing dizzily upwards. Already she could feel her body being compressed. A mist came over her eyes, and she quickly tuned in to the electric waves, pressed the key which set her sinking, and dropped at a speed of three hundred kilometers per hour.

The barograph had registered a height of 26,000 meters. The oxygen-cylinder had served its purpose.

Loisi dropped to 2,000 meters, and tuned in to the artificial waves.

Below her was the Baltic; to the north, land and a mountain chain. She was approaching Sweden.

With a few touches Loisi tuned in her telephone, estimated the distance and strength of the waves, and got into touch with Montford. She pulled up the receiver at her breast, and tried to speak with him.

It was some time before the connection was established. Again and again disturbing currents interfered. At last she found the right wave.

"Hello, hello, Professor! Can you hear me? Hello, hello; can you hear me?"

The answer came softly:

"Yes, I can hear you. Where are you now?"

"Speak slower and further away from the mouthpiece; I can't quite catch it all."

"I was asking where you are now?"

"Over the Baltic, near the Swedish coast. How are things in Berlin?"

"I don't know. I can't leave the house."

"Well, that's all for the present, Professor. I'll try and get you again in an hour's time."

Far below, ships were moving. They had already sighted the dark speck in the sky. The navigators were pointing their powerful Zeiss glasses upwards. Loisi realized that she could be seen from below. Hurriedly she called up Montford again."

"Hello, hello, Professor!"

No reply.

She tried again. Königswusterhausen remained silent. Montford, after Loisi's call, had gone to dinner and switched off the apparatus for a moment.

It was clear to Loisi that the ships would broadcast

what they had seen. This she wanted to avoid, lest aircraft should get up again and compel her to seek higher regions.

Again and again she tried to reach Montford, and at last ticking noises in the receiver indicated that she was through.

"Hello ! do you hear me ?"

"Yes."

"Jam wave 750 for twenty minutes. Got that ?"

"Yes."

It was too late. The wireless operators had already made their report to Sweden.

The news was received in Kalmar and Stockholm and passed on to the police and press, and everywhere flyers took the air to get a closer view of this air spectre, and possibly force it to the ground.

While this news was being wirelessed from Stockholm to Berlin, Montford interrupted the transmission.

An operator in Nauen had accidentally succeeded in tapping the second conversation between Loisi and Montford. He at once called in a colleague, who was in time to hear the final words.

Fragments had also been caught in Eilvese. The words : "Jam the . . ." in particular had been distinctly heard, and then the interruption had been effected.

Berlin was cut off from the north.

CHAPTER FIFTY-FOUR

IN Stockholm the excitement was even greater than it had been in Berlin. More than a hundred aeroplanes were flying round the town, sweeping high and low.

Two hours before, the message had come in from Berlin; and half an hour before, reports had been received from the steamers and the Kalmar station.

The aircraft were informed by wireless from the ground that the mysterious apparition was nearing the coast. As though in obedience to a word of command, they all made off southward.

After Loisi had given Montford the order to jam transmission, she rose again more than 3,000 meters and flew, first eastwards and then westward. Over the Finnish Schären she dropped one thousand meters, set the accelerator to a speed of a thousand kilometers an hour, and in three minutes reached Stockholm.

Here she reduced speed and dropped to 500 meters.

There were no aircraft in sight. The people sighted Loisi, and a single cry rose from the town:

"There it is!"

Everyone ran out to look. These cold-blooded Scandinavians were roused to frenzy.

The wireless station recalled the airmen, but before they could reach Stockholm, Loisi had flown on to the north-westward and vanished in the sky.

In the Hammgatan a weighted piece of paper had fallen. It was at once snatched up by a reporter of the *Svenska Dagbladet* and rushed to the editor.

Half an hour later thousands of copies of a special edition were being flung from the newspaper cars into the outstretched hands of the excited populace, who snatched them one from the other.

Message to all mankind.

I rule the air. I control the forces of nature! I can destroy you! I can make you a paradise on earth.

The news was spread all over the world by telegraph.

The rotary machines in the newspaper printing offices were running all out.

Millions upon millions of copies of special editions flooded the town.

The King of Sweden immediately convened a meeting of ministers and a state of siege was proclaimed.

People behaved like madmen. The neurotic went out of their minds.

CHAPTER FIFTY-FIVE

WHAT man had feared decades before during the war seemed now to have come about in times of peace.

In all states men feared the outbreak of a world revolution.

Everywhere armies were held ready to suppress risings of the people.

Loisi appeared over Oslo, dropped her message, and shortly afterwards was flying over Malmo and Copenhagen.

Hundreds of aircraft swarmed in the air. Some succeeded in catching sight of Loisi and coming within 500 or 1,000 meters of her; but they never succeeded in reaching her. With horrified surprise, they saw this flying human creature disappear into space at a fantastic speed to which there seemed to be no limit. These airmen at once recognized that human power and man-built machinery were impotent against the mysterious flyer.

As she flew over the North Sea, Loisi took out the stopper from her thermophore and satisfied her appetite. She cautiously removed the protecting mask from her mouth and ate a few biscuits. She had felt no pangs of hunger, but she had to keep up her strength.

In England people had been prepared for the arrival of the air-spectre, as the mysterious apparition was called. They were ready if necessary to bring down the disturber of the peace with cannon.

The whole Air Force, and large numbers of private aeroplanes, stood ready to take off.

The police were scattered over various quarters of London. They were armed with carbines. Special attention was paid to the Limehouse district, Whitechapel, and Islington, and all traffic to and from the West India Docks was stopped.

In all barracks throughout the country the military stood under arms.

Loisi was not expected until the late afternoon, as it was thought she would reach London via Holland, Belgium, and France.

She divined the thoughts of the English police, flew over Heligoland, crossed the North Sea at a height of 4,000 meters, and suddenly appeared over London, before the aeroplanes keeping watch over the coast had discovered her presence.

Five minutes later hundreds of planes were swarming round Loisi like bees.

The situation was highly dangerous. Collisions threatened every moment.

The use of firearms was out of the question, unless they wanted to hit one another.

Loisi was hemmed in from all sides and photographed by her escort.

In her flying-rig she looked like some strange monster. The aviators, however, did not let themselves be frightened. They knew that inside this fantastic garb and behind this mask a human creature was concealed, and what made things more interesting still for the men of the air, more piquant, was the fact that this human being was, according to trustworthy report, a young girl.

It amused Loisi vastly to fool these airmen. Below, in Hyde Park, Piccadilly Circus, and on the embankment,

thousands of people were standing. The upturned faces and gesticulating hands afforded a strange spectacle.

The exciting event only lasted five minutes. Loisi saw ways of escape open in all directions. She quietly pressed the key which drove her like lightning aloft, and before the airmen realized what was happening, she had vanished from their sight into the ether.

CHAPTER FIFTY-SIX

BRUSSELS and Paris were in delirium. Everyone who could walk and was not bedridden remained all day in the streets. Long since, special editions and the early evening papers had reported the news of the strange flight over Europe. The wildest rumours were spread and believed.

Whenever an aeroplane appeared in the distance, like a speck whose shape could not yet be distinguished, people shouted and craned their necks, and they were very disappointed when it drew nearer and developed into a monoplane or biplane.

The people of Brussels and Paris had to wait. Loisi had laid a course from London to Holland, where she flew over Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and the Hague. Suddenly she appeared over Brussels, dived into the middle of a group of aircraft, threw down her message, and vanished as quickly as she had come.

Over the whole of Northern France swarms of private aeroplanes and squadrons of military planes patrolled.

The new observatory of Asnières trained its giant telescope of 50,000 diameters northwards, and the watchers sat continuously before the curious 20-ton mirror, to see and photograph the flying human.

The film-companies hired large aeroplanes and sent up their camera-men to record this epoch-making event.

To their complete surprise, Loisi appeared from the south. She had flown round Paris at a great height, and was now over the southern suburbs.

She was first sighted in Choisy, and then swept over Vitry, heading for the centre of the town.

The boulevards, the Place de la Concorde, and the Avenue des Champs-Élysées were one undulating sea of humanity. It was here that the first battle between populace and police was fought.

The Prefect of Police had ordered his men to take vigorous measures, and his subordinates acted too readily upon this, so that almost at once there were scuffles which finally developed into pitched battles.

Military were called in to suppress the disorder.

One interesting fact was that in Paris alone there were more than a thousand cases of burglary, property worth millions being stolen while the houses stood completely empty.

Loisi dropped her message over the Place de L'Étoile, the paper landing on the Arc de Triomphe.

It was late at night before calm was restored in Paris. After a brief session of the Ministry, a state of siege was proclaimed.

The airmen followed Loisi on her way southward. At Lyons she vanished above the clouds, shaking off her pursuers.

A sudden weariness had come over her, despite her success. The hours of flying in this unaccustomed oblique posture, the heavy equipment and apparatus, had overtaxed her strength. She decided to come down on some lonely mountain peak.

Without showing herself on the Riviera, she flew, at a great height, after tuning into the Rome radio station, over the Alpes Maritimes towards Monte Rosa.

She dropped comfortably on to a bare rocky plateau at the edge of a glacier, at once switched out of the electric waves, and crawled to a sheltered spot. There she took

off her mask, and finally raised the heavy helmet from her shoulders. She lay motionless for nearly an hour. Her experiences and tremendous success had overwhelmed her.

To-day the whole world was talking of this little girl from Graz. The radio had borne the news to the remotest corners of the earth. She ruled the world with her invention, had subjected to her will the laws of nature. The blessings it would bring she would use for the benefit of all men, but in the first place of her homeland and the great sister state.

The Germans of the Reich should at last respect the Austrians, those Austrians they called Nazis and jeered at, quite forgetting what vast stores of culture this unjustly mocked nation had presented to them.

With her invention she could stop all war, all cruel sacrifice of human life.

If mankind refused, they should feel Aloisia Hacker's might.

Cloud-bursts should swamp the battlefields, making progress for men, animals, and machines impossible, placing unbridgeable, resisting obstacles in their way, compelling them to seek peace or see their country destroyed.

The thousand-year-old nation she would convert to humanity and eternal happiness. She would convince it by the blessings she could bestow that peace and love alone matter in life.

With her apparatus she would make the electric streams that sweep through the ether useful to mankind, place in men's hands a fount of power that would make all material fuel superfluous.

She could drain the seas of their water and make the desert fruitful; she could at will make climates salubrious and healing, control warmth and cold as she chose.

Constant warmth and regular rains would greatly

multiply the chances of rich harvests, and lower the cost of living.

Material comfort would exercise a great influence upon the moods and characters of mankind; sickness would become rare and powerful healthy races would arise.

The girl's glance strayed over the snow- and ice-clad mountain titans. In the valleys were luxuriant vegetation and life; here sterility and death. It would be an easy thing for Loisi to melt these masses of ice, bathe the mountain peaks in everlasting sunshine, and make them fecund.

Great tasks loomed ahead of her. But first the nation must be convinced, must get used to the changed situation.

From where she lay, Loisi saw an aeroplane in the distance, coming doubtless from Turin. Like hundreds of others it would be looking for her.

She felt cold. She pulled the helmet over her head, drew down the mask, and placed dark snow-glasses over her goggles. A switch connected the batteries with the resistances, and a comforting warmth enveloped her.

The airman had vanished over her head. His plane had swayed heavily in the storm. A blizzard was setting in. Loisi combed the wireless waves in the atmosphere, trying one switch after another.

Wave-length 200 of the Zürich station bore her over the mountains to Genoa, and thence to Rome.

Once more there was a repetition of the same scenes that she had observed in the other towns; below, the excited throng; above, the swarms of aeroplanes.

Loisi skilfully extricated herself and disappeared northward.

CHAPTER FIFTY-SEVEN

AT Ragusa on the Adriatic, Pfleiderer was waiting for Loisi to appear in the air.

He had been on the Dalmatian coast for weeks, enjoying the mild spring weather.

News had come from time to time from his ward, and he was looking forward eagerly to the day which should release him from his exile.

He felt quite certain that Loisi would achieve what she was aiming at. She would become the world's most famous figure. In imagination he already saw everywhere the monuments which would be erected to the great inventress. He had dropped his jokes about removing the Archduke Johann from his pedestal in Graz to make room for Loisi's statue. It was certain that one day a giant memorial would be erected in honour of his ward.

Pfleiderer was conscious of a touch of vanity. A certain reflected glory would fall upon him; his name would also be engraved on history.

After all it was he, even if only after long resistance, who had helped this girl, this great inventress. Not for nothing had he provided that enormous amount of money. Up to the present Loisi had spent 30,000 schillings on platinum alone, in addition to large sums for all the other apparatus. He would give his whole fortune to help her realize her ambitions.

And now she had arrived. Two days before, he had been informed by means of the radiograph that she would fly over Ragusa via Venice and the Adriatic in the late afternoon of the 1st May.

Pfleiderer had been roaming nervously about the streets since one o'clock, keeping near the harbour.

At two o'clock a great wave of excitement swept through the town. The first messages about Aloisia Hacker's flight were posted up in front of the Imperial and Lapad Hotels.

Pfleiderer was almost too moved to read them. Stars danced before his eyes and his sight was dimmed.

Telegrams continued to rain in and the excitement rose to fever heat when it was learned that the girl had flown over Milan and Venice.

The name of Aloisia Hacker was on all lips. Months before it had ceased to be a secret that it was a Graz girl who had achieved this epoch-making, world-shattering invention.

The police investigations in Untersberg, Loisi's flight from Schramm in Berlin, and finally the mysterious package falling on the Graz sports ground left no doubt as to her identity.

The hope was unanimously expressed that the daring flyer would pass over the Dalmatian coast and Ragusa.

Pfleiderer felt a strong urge to shout out to the people that they would not be disappointed.

At five o'clock he chartered a rowing-boat, and pulled out alone into the bay. His wireless receiver lay in a case on the bottom of the boat. He hoped that Loisi would give him a sign out of the air.

A number of black dots in the western sky attracted Pfleiderer's attention. Through his field-glasses, he was soon able to distinguish that in front of a flock of aeroplanes a human figure in fantastic costume was cleaving the air at terrific speed.

Almost at once Loisi was over the island of Kolooep, then she flew over Ragusa, dropping a note on to the town, which was picked up in St. Peter's Square, and five

seconds later she passed over the mountains and was engulfed in the clouds.

"A greeting to my dear ones", was written on the paper. Nothing more. Pfleiderer knew what she meant.

Belgrade and Budapest were also visited, and everywhere there was the same excitement, the same effect.

CHAPTER FIFTY-EIGHT

GRAZ was confidently expecting that Aloisia Hacker would fly over her native town.

Since the arrival of the first news, the Schlossberg had been filled by quite half the inhabitants.

Soldiers kept order in the streets.

The police had not taken any steps to follow her. They were not sure how they stood in the matter. If this mysterious queen of the air was really Aloisia Hacker, the girl from Graz—and of this there could be no further doubt —it should be a source of pride that a daughter of the town had succeeded in bestowing upon humanity the most miraculous invention of all time.

The governor of Styria had a long telephone conversation with the President of the Bund when at three o'clock in the afternoon messages poured in from Berlin, Stockholm, Oslo, London, and Paris reporting the progress of the flight.

The President called together the ministers who were in Vienna and discussed the event with them.

It was decided to wait and see whether Aloisia Hacker —and here there was no doubt at all that it was she—would fly over German-Austrian territory, and what precautionary measures the other powers would take. The governor-general of Styria was instructed to ensure quiet and order, but not to interfere with the Graz girl's flight.

The Council of Ministers remained in session, and police headquarters at Vienna were instructed to prevent any disorder or interference with the traffic.

The Graz factories released their employees at four in the afternoon, and all businesses shut down.

Frau Wurz and Fräulein Mittermaier were worked up into a great state of nerves and nothing could calm old Crescentia.

"Goodness! Her flying about in the air like that. Has she gone completely crazy? And I dare say in those short skirts with nothing under them but a pair of short knickers! Oh, my! oh, my!"

"But, Frau Crescentia," the shorthand-typist interrupted the lament, "Fräulein Loisi is dressed like a man."

"That's worse still, worse still; gallivanting about the sky there in trousers! Whatever will people think?"

"Don't talk such nonsense," cried Frau Wurz. "Now perhaps you'll see what Loisi really is. She's not a schoolgirl any more. She's the most famous person in the whole world."

"So long as she doesn't fall, perhaps on the Schlossberg."

The little balcony of Fräulein Mittermaier's workroom was the observation post of the three women. A huge pot of coffee stood on a little table beside a plate filled with cakes.

Herr Bindernagel made the most of the squabble between his three friends and secretly annexed pieces of cake one by one.

Hansl, the son of the milk-woman next door, was sitting on the fence of the Schneiders' house. He had armed himself with an old telescope and was searching the sky. Twice already he had fallen from his exalted perch into the onion bed in the garden, but this did not worry him. He climbed back on to the fence, terrified of missing the moment when the mistress of the skies would fly over Graz.

The porter of Pfleiderer's house came running round

the corner in a great state. Frau Wurz called to him and asked whether he had heard any news.

"Yes, I have indeed. She was over Belgrade an hour ago and they've seen her already in Arad. She'll be here any minute if she's coming over Graz."

And not long after, they heard a hum which was soon drowned in a swelling roar from the crowds.

First were seen in the distance four airmen flying over the east side of the town, and ahead of them was a small elongated speck which suddenly dropped to a lower level, and passed quite close over the Rosenberg.

"Loisi! *Maria und Josef!* Whatever does she look like? She *has* gone fat!" cried Crescentia, and the glass trembled in her hands.

The enthusiasm of the Grazers knew no bounds.

A shower of papers fluttered down from the sky, and the people struggled and fought round them.

A hundred meters above the Schlossberg, Loisi flew round her native town, her home.

During all the years she had been away, she had never felt any home-sickness, but now when she saw again the scenes of her childhood, a strange feeling overcame her. The heavy flying suit suddenly seemed to tighten at the breast, and she felt a stifling sensation in her throat.

There below her lay her home town. Thousands were standing with faces upturned, arms outstretched, open mouths, waving handkerchiefs. They must be shouting their welcome, rejoicing that it should be a child of this quiet peaceful town who was gliding up there over their heads.

Loisi would dearly have liked to land, embrace her old friends Crescentia and Frau Wurz, and say how do you do to Herr Bindernagel and the two Fräulein Mittermaiers.

But she could not do this yet. First she must have

security for her apparatus and experiments; her invention must be guaranteed by the Austrian government; then she would at once come to Austria and present her great gift to her native land. Out of a lead tube she took the hundreds of notes intended for Graz and sent them scattering to earth.

A greeting to the town of Graz and to its citizenesses and citizens. Long live my home!

Aloisia Hacker.

Loisi flew over Graz four times, with the aeroplanes at a respectful distance above her.

Suddenly a howling wail broke loose which even reached Loisi's ear. It was the factory syrens greeting the bold navigator of the clouds.

After crossing the Mur, Loisi vanished northward over Weinzöol and St. Gotthard. The aeroplanes formed her escort.

In Kapfenberg, in Mürzuschlag, all along her route, the factory syrens greeted her ecstatically.

The flyer saluted the Sennering in its spring attire and the throng of people in the fields in front of the big hotel, by circling round them.

Like a flash she sped over Schottwich and Gloggnitz. A soft twilight was setting in.

The Vienna Neustadt and Baden were flown over. Squadrons of aeroplanes came out to meet Loisi and accompanied her in the air.

In the old Imperial city all work and almost all traffic were at a standstill.

The Viennese were behaving with striking calm. An almost solemn mood had taken possession of this usually merry people. Anyone who attempted to jest about the

expected sensation was at once snubbed. It was felt instinctively that this day would at last restore freedom to the humiliated country and raise it again to its ancient greatness.

All open spaces were filled with people. The crowd was tight packed in front of the Rathaus and Houses of Parliament, in the Volksgarten, and in the old and new Burghofs.

Those who had heard the news in time had hurried up one of the mountains which embrace Vienna in a verdant circle.

On many houses flags suddenly fluttered out, and others imitated their neighbours.

At every moment the masses of people were lashed into excitement by shouts, and eyes searched the blue summer sky; but always it was a false alarm for which the many aeroplanes over Vienna were responsible.

In front of the cafés on the Ring stood loudspeakers. Every half-hour the Ravag station announced the latest news about the flight.

"Alosia Hacker is passing over Graz."

The news spread with the speed of the wind. In two minutes the message was known in the remotest quarters of the town.

"Schottwien reports that she has passed over Semmering," shrieked the loudspeaker, and excitement rose to fever-heat.

Now it was certain that they would see with their own eyes this new, this eighth wonder of the world—as the extra editions of the Vienna papers called it.

The people's shout of triumph began in Meidling, the Thirteenth District, over which Loisi flew first. It spread swiftly through the streets. Men and women waved, cheered themselves hoarse, went wild, shook each other's

hands, embraced one another, and then at once turned back to watch the mistress of the skies swim lightly at a height of only 70 to 80 meters on the waves of the Rosenhügel station.

Above the Opera Ring, Loisi turned over the Kärtnerstrasse to the Stephansplatz, where she circled round the cathedral, while at a great height dozens of aviators performed graceful evolutions above the flyer.

On the tower of the fire station appeared the chief of the Vienna fire brigade, and other officials for whom the hundreds of steps had not proved too severe a trial. Through their powerful glasses they could see Aloisia Hacker's white face behind the green goggles.

She seemed quite close to these gentlemen, almost within reach of their hands. All were amazed at the apparatus, with its array of keys and switches, which the girl carried in front of her.

Film camera-men hung with their machines from dangerous places, twirling handles in order to be able to show this flight in slow motion. Cameras clicked at every skylight, every window.

Loisi sent notes fluttering in the wind to say that she would drop a message to the Austrian National Council over the Parlamentshof.

She vanished over the houses on the Graben, and immediately reappeared near the Schottentor, flew along the Ring, greeted and cheered by the thousands standing before the Rathaus and in the Volksgarten. A feeling of awe came over them. Only now did they truly realize what a tremendous achievement this girl had compassed. For more than six hours, excluding one hour's rest, she had been in the air, and had flown over the greater part of Europe.

Over the Parliament building she came down quite

low, released a long metal tube from her apparatus, and dropped it into the centre court of the palace. She saw two servants pick it up and carry it to a group of gentlemen gathered in front of the door.

To the west of Vienna, behind the Türkenschanzpark, the sun sank to rest. Into its deep golden rays flew a young being, who in an incredibly short time had achieved what other inventors and scientists had vainly striven for during thousands of years ; a young simple girl, blessed by God, and a bearer of blessings to her fatherland and all mankind.

With bowed heads the people of Vienna returned to their homes. They had witnessed a spectacle that would remain with them so long as life lasted. They had been privileged to assist at the inauguration of a happier age, and in every heart welled up a sublime consciousness that a child of their homeland had shown to the world the dawn of brighter days.

They had watched the first real human flight.

Tu Felix Austria !

CHAPTER FIFTY-NINE

SYDNEY had had no direct news of Loisi for hours, but had heard all he wanted to know through the loudspeaker.

The name of Aloisia Hacker was being broadcast over the whole world.

The American listened to all stations. Reports came in from every country in Europe. Even Moscow was keeping its hearers informed, and Montford was able to make out in their broadcasts a distorted version of the name Hacker.

It was now an hour since the last message had come through from Munich, reporting that the woman Icarus had flown over the town through the evening sky.

The announcer reported facetiously that neither white sausage nor fresh broached beer-barrels had been able to exercise any attraction over the townsfolk. All had become star-gazers and were suffering from stiff necks.

Loisi might appear at any moment, and Montford kept a watchful eye on the apparatus. He never took the headphone of the sensitive receiver from his ear, and saw to it that the current was constantly ready for Loisi's call.

Then suddenly, without any warning, and indeed before he really expected her, she sank noiselessly on to the platform of the tower. He saw her grope for the mask, half raise it; and then her hands dropped and she reeled backwards. In a flash he was beside her. He lifted her in his arms, carried her down to the big living-room, laid her on the couch, carefully removed the flying helmet,

unfastened the parachute and heavy apparatus from her body, and drew the lead-weighted boots from her feet. Then he quickly loosened all the straps which were constraining her, and tore her clothing open at the throat.

The girl lay white as marble; she looked dead.

Montford chafed her temples with alcohol, dropped brandy on her lips, and laid a cold wet cloth on her brow.

Again and again the prayer came from his lips: "God in heaven, don't let her die!" Now he knew definitely that he no longer merely liked this student, or rather this girl; no, he loved her; loved her, and was afraid of his love.

He drew the thick gloves from her hands, rolled up her sleeves, and rubbed her pulses with alcohol.

He was so wrapped up in his anxiety about her that he did not notice that Loisi was slowly regaining consciousness.

"Don't let her die! Don't let her die! I love her!"

A painful smile came over her white features, and she involuntarily seized his hands. Startled, he turned his face towards her.

"I love you too! I love . . .!" The words came softly from her lips.

His head sank on her breast, and his lips touched her hands. He tried to speak, but she pressed her fingers to his mouth and whispered:

"Don't speak, don't speak now. This moment is too beautiful, too sacred."

CHAPTER SIXTY

A DEEP silence reigned in the national council when the President of the Bund rose to his feet.

"Gentlemen. We are in the presence of an epoch-making event. An invention, the importance of which must not be underestimated, has been made by a daughter of Austria; an invention which, if it fulfils her hopes, will make this land of ours, our home, a happy place, and the whole earth the most fruitful of the planets.

"Aloisia Hacker, the girl from Graz, has already proved that she can fly round the continent of Europe in the space of a few hours, fly round it without aeroplane, balloon, or wings, but merely—and this is the miraculous, the incredible, fantastic aspect of the event—merely on the waves of both natural and artificially generated electric currents, and that by means of an apparatus of her own invention.

"Not only that; Aloisia Hacker has overcome laws of nature which seemed immutable, has made herself their mistress. With the apparatus constructed by this inventress, the law of gravity is dead.

"Aloisia Hacker has offered to present to her fatherland this magnificent invention, the greatest that has yet been achieved, and one which it will be difficult to surpass.

"Gentlemen, the Herr Referent will read to you the most important passages of the message which Aloisia Hacker has sent us through the air."

The white-haired old Referent rose, took up the document in front of him, cleared his throat a little, and let his eyes wander over the rows of deputies.

The hall was in the grip of an intense silence. All party-differences, all hatred and strife, were stilled. With curious, almost reverent bearing the deputies looked at the speaker, who began to read:

"To the Government of Austria.

"I have conquered the air and the earth. After many years of experiment, I have been fortunate enough to construct an apparatus which will enable any person to move freely in the ether.

"I have succeeded in discovering and analysing the essential nature of electricity.

"I have explored the air strata to a height of 20,000 meters above the earth, and have found that tremendously powerful natural electric streams constantly flow round our globe.

"My apparatus has not only made it possible for me to draw down these streams to the earth and make them serviceable to mankind; I can control them at will."

"Hear, hear!"

"I have been able by means of my super-sensitive apparatus to unite the artificially generated electric currents with those which permeate the ether, and thereby exercise decisive influence upon atmospheric conditions."

"Incredible!" cried Professor Holzbein, and leaning over his neighbour, he whispered: "What if it's all a leg-pull?"

The Referent continued:

"I can counteract elemental phenomena which exert a harmful influence upon the well-being of mankind, destroy

crops and cause floods. Only against volcanic eruptions and earthquakes am I helpless. As I am in a position to call forth perpetual sunshine, hold off prolonged rains, and regulate rainfall at will, the possibility is opened of multiplying many times the fruitfulness and harvest-yielding capacity of the world.

"A permanently moderated climate will affect favourably the health of mankind and certain forms of disease will be completely eradicated.

"I am able to bring heavy rains in fixed places and at fixed times, so rendering fruitful regions which hitherto have been barren; I can make the rain fall at night so that the days may be full of sunshine, the nights wet or dry but never cold, always mild.

"There are many things that I can accomplish with my apparatus and all for the good of the human race.

"My sole condition for handing over my invention in its entirety to my country is that I shall be granted security to continue my experiments at my own expense, and that it be passed on to other nations only provided they guarantee to place no obstacles in the way of a union of Austria with the German Reich and the union of all German-speaking peoples.

"There must be no pressure. Everything must be arranged by a friendly exchange of notes.

"My invention must not bring war to the world, but eternal peace; and I desire that all peoples shall share its benefits, provided they comply with the stated conditions.

"Reply to be made by wireless. I shall then come to Austria by air and immediately construct my apparatus. The German Reich must guarantee unhindered transport.

"Aloisia Hacker."

The reading was followed by complete silence. The

whole assembly seemed deeply affected by the grandeur of the conception which had been revealed to them.

The deputies, with a single exception, believed Aloisia Hacker implicitly. The day before, they had with their own eyes seen the daring girl's flight and convinced themselves that a human being could cover tremendous distances in the air in a few hours. The telegrams and wireless reports from almost all European countries admitted no doubt about the efficiency and infinite possibilities of this invention.

The earlier reports from Berlin of the twice-repeated artificial demolition of cloud formations, their forced scattering, and the subsequent rise of temperature under the sunshine, had long ago proved the justice of Aloisia Hacker's claims.

The assembly was unanimous in its decision that the Council of Ministers should take immediate steps to comply with the inventress's wishes. It was decided that foreign states should be informed of the situation and Aloisia Hacker be urged to come to Austria immediately to continue her experiments under government protection.

The Council of Ministers decided to act on these lines, and that same night documents were drafted which were to be handed to the ambassadors and representatives of the foreign powers.

This was done the following day.

CHAPTER SIXTY-ONE

POLICE headquarters at Graz was greatly astonished when, before anyone had learned of his arrival, Herr Pfleiderer called on the President.

He was at once admitted. The Chief of Police expressed his regret at the misunderstanding which had occurred.

"That doesn't matter, your Excellency," said Pfleiderer. "I have been quite all right except for a little homesickness. It was lucky though that passports were abolished twenty years ago. Nor should I ever have got about as I did, or seen so much of the world, if my ward had not compelled me to do so."

"Oh, yes. You mean this little Aloisia Hacker who is now giving all the governments and the gentlemen of the League of Nations so much to think about."

"And what about that little matter of the birth and domicile certificate ?"

"So far no one has taken out a writ."

"Then the matter is being dropped ?"

"As far as I know, Herr Pfleiderer."

"Even by the public prosecutor ?"

"I think so, or we should have heard. The warrant was only for abduction ; no other crime was mentioned."

"What about murder of my ward ?"

"There was some suspicion of that, but it wasn't included in the warrant."

"What has happened to the detective who was so hot on my trail ?"

"He has been back in Vienna a long time. He gave up the chase."

. .

There was a beef soup with delicate dumplings; then roast pork with crisp brown crackling; baked potatoes cut small on which the hot fat still sizzled; a cucumber salad; and finally an apple pudding such as Frau Wurz alone knew how to make.

"Eat. Help yourself, Herr Professor," Pfleiderer urged. "You look like a starving dog. Yes, they're a splendid lot, the Germans, but they can't cook. It's to be hoped union with Germany won't mean that we have to adopt the German dining-car cooking. That would wreck the whole scheme."

Montford laughed. Pfleiderer's dialect reminded him of Loisi. Then he sighed. If only she were here! The negotiations between the Powers were dragging on endlessly.

The Aloisia Hacker problem had even brought danger of war. Neighbouring powers who were afraid they might have to give up German-Austrian territory which they had not possessed before the end of the war, put forward proposals through their delegates in Geneva that Aloisia Hacker's invention should be suppressed, on the grounds that an upheaval of the world economic situation would certainly cause revolutions. Should Austria refuse to comply, they declared that they would be forced to occupy the whole country and prevent the construction of the apparatus.

The great Powers: France, England, Spain, Russia, and the united Scandinavian States, carried a resolution in face of opposition from the rest that the Austrian inventress should be given opportunity of continuing her practical experiments in her own country with a view to convincing the world of the wonderful nature of her achievement.

During the weeks of negotiation Loisi and Montford

had dismantled almost the whole of the apparatus, packed it in a large number of cases, and with the help of the German police passed it across the Austro-German frontier.

In Vienna, Montford, with the secret authority of the ministers, reconstructed the apparatus on the roof of the Neue Hofburg. There it stood under lock and key, guarded night and day.

Montford had now been three days in Graz. Loisi had asked him to go there, but to make no mention of their secret engagement. As soon as the Powers agreed to Loisi's wishes and granted Austria full freedom for the practical exploitation of her invention, he was to return to Berlin in order to assist with her further experiments and help her to get into the air for her flight to Vienna.

After weeks of debate in Geneva and in the ministries of the Powers, the opposition was subdued and requested under threat of force to restrain their aggressive desires.

The issue involved amounted indeed to no less than clearing a path for the future well-being of all mankind. No weight could be given to the alleged rights of individual states, large or small.

Whosoever opposed the edicts of the League of Nations was to be deprived of all rights, and military measures were to be taken against them.

Many delegates who, on the alleged authority of their Ministries, fought in opposition, found the ground cut from under their feet. The populations of these countries broke into revolution. They had no desire to be thrust out of the brotherhood of mankind, but intended to share the benefits of the great invention, even at the cost of apparent sacrifices.

All objections based on questions of prestige, and excuses about jeopardizing the authority of the state failed before the advantages which the exploitation of this

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All objections based on questions of prestige, and excuses about jeopardizing the authority of the state failed before the advantages which the exploitation of this

invention would bring and proved no sufficient justification for severance from other nations.

Popular feeling seethed; revolutions threatened; the obdurate ministers were driven out and replaced by new ones, who were told that if they did not yield, the population as a whole would decide for union with Austria.

The broadcast report that the League of Nations recognized Austria's wishes, would not oppose the union with the German Reich, and would not prevent any German race of the bordering countries from joining the Motherland was heard by Montford while he was drinking his coffee after the festive lunch.

Two hours later, Pfleiderer and the American boarded an aeroplane which brought them to Berlin the same afternoon.

Herr Bindernagel accompanied them, and was no more impressed by the flight in stormy weather than was his master. The air can cause seasickness as well as the sea.

A ministerial council was held that same night, and on the following morning the inhabitants of both countries were surprised to hear that the union of Germany and Austria was an accomplished fact, and that on Sunday at eight a.m., Aloisia Hacker would fly to Berlin and come down in the Lustgarten for the official reception.

The proclamation of the United Reich of Germany and Austria was to be followed by a celebration of Mass in the open air, after which the inventress would be publicly thanked by the whole ministry.

Aloisia Hacker would then fly for an hour over Berlin, and at ten o'clock would start from the Lustgarten on a flight to Vienna. Hundreds of aeroplanes would form an escort.

The police had made far-seeing and exemplary prepara-

tions. Military forces were ordered to Berlin to control the crowds.

Provincials and foreigners flocked to the capital in hundreds of thousands by special trains and aeroplanes.

As early as Saturday night, thousands had taken up their positions in the Lustgarten and Unter den Linden.

In front of the cathedral an area a hundred meters square had been enclosed by troops. In the middle of a dais two meters high, flanked to left and right by stands, rose a platform on which Loisi was to land and be welcomed by the President of the Reich and the heads of the Government.

Everywhere fluttered the German and Austrian standards, which were soon to coalesce to form one flag.

No building in Berlin was without its bunting.

Montford had mounted an apparatus fitted with electromagnets on the platform of the Lustgarten to facilitate Loisi's landing. Immediately after her arrival, the American was to fly to Vienna in a very fast aeroplane to be ready to receive her there.

Loisi intended to reach the Austrian capital at two o'clock in the afternoon, after first attempting a climb of 3,000 kilometers. She intended to shoot up at a speed of 2,000 kilometers per hour, explore the air strata or airless space, take measurements, and appear over Vienna punctually at two.

The Vienna authorities also had prepared a splendid reception for the brilliant inventress.

The hotels and boarding houses of Vienna were unable to cope with the masses of visitors. All rooms in private houses were booked, and in schools and public buildings, wherever there was space, mattresses and straw were laid down.

A million schoolchildren were to be stationed in the

outer Burggarten and Volksgarten between the state museums. They had been brought to Vienna from all the provinces and former crown lands.

Overseas aircraft brought foreigners from every part of the world.

The Viennese insisted on all houses being decorated.

The streets leading to the Burg from the inner town and the Ring had been closed to traffic since Saturday midnight. All traffic from the parliamentary buildings to the Opera House was diverted to the Lastenstrasse behind the Ring.

Inside the closed streets and squares were to be stationed, in addition to the schoolchildren, the official delegations of every town and country. A limited number of admittance cards were also distributed among the inhabitants.

The Viennese were informed that the flying woman would, after the reception ceremony, fly over all the twenty-one districts at a low altitude, and would be visible from all the places named in the newspapers and public notices.

Never in the history of Vienna had the hot-sausage men and ice-cream vendors done such a trade as that Saturday night and Sunday.

Many people came provided with chairs, camp-chairs, and stools. Cases and packages containing provisions were seen on all sides.

All the cafés of Vienna remained open throughout the night, and the police took no notice.

In the Burgtheater a special festival performance in Loisi's honour had been arranged for the Sunday evening.

CHAPTER SIXTY-TWO

"I'VE got something to tell you before we go back to Graz, Guardian."

"I can well imagine it, Loisi," Pfleiderer replied. "What you told me that day . . ."

Quickly she laid her hand over his mouth, and then drew it back with a gasp of pain.

Herr Bindernagel, sitting on Herr Pfleiderer's lap, had misunderstood Loisi's movement and, thinking she was going to hurt his master, had dug his teeth hard into her little finger.

"You little devil! What are you thinking about, Herr Bindernagel? Surely you're not biting Auntie Loisi?"

"Well, Loisi, what is it?"

"Oh, only that I'm engaged to Syd."

"I congratulate you, but it's no news to me. I knew it a long time ago."

"Did Syd tell you?"

"I never said a word."

"No, my big clever ward. You told me yourself."

"When we get to Graz we'll celebrate the engagement and wedding together, Guardian. Will that be all right?"

"You can do anything you like in Austria to-day. You can be President of the Bund if you like."

"Thanks very much, but that doesn't attract me."

CHAPTER SIXTY-THREE

BY six in the morning swarms of film operators, press photographers, and reporters had found their way in front of the lonely villa outside Königswusterhausen.

Since the issue of the Geneva protocol, Loisi's hiding-place had ceased to be a secret. The grounds were guarded by 200 policemen. Only official representatives of the authorities were admitted.

Loisi refused to allow herself to be either photographed or filmed.

In the grounds in front of the villa tall stands had been erected overnight for the use of the camera-men. They were anxious to take photographs and films of the historic rise into the air.

Blood-red, the sun rose in the east.

In the large living-room, Loisi, Montford, and Pfleiderer were sitting at breakfast.

"Eat, Loisi!" Pfleiderer said. "You've got a hard day before you."

"Yes, darling, Mr. Pfleiderer is right. You've no need to rush now. You've nearly three hours."

"I want to try a little practice flight first."

"So you can; but is it really necessary?"

"Yes, I want to get my hand in."

At seven, an envoy from the town of Berlin arrived to inquire whether everything was proceeding according to programme. On receiving an affirmative reply, the gentleman departed, regretting only that he had not been able to see the young lady.

Immediately afterwards Loisi came out of her room. She was already in her flying-costume, and Montford began to fit on the apparatus.

Pfleiderer was dumb with astonishment, and Herr Bindernagel barked furiously when Loisi, in helmet and mask, approached her guardian.

A few minutes later she rose into the air and shot up to heaven, before the photographers had time to click a shutter or turn a handle.

Never had Berlin spent such a restless night. The streets were alive with dense swarms of humanity.

When day broke the excitement increased. From six o'clock in the morning bands began to play in every quarter of the town. That the people were in holiday mood was obvious in their eyes.

The nervous tension increased as the hands of the clocks moved on.

Shortly before they struck eight, a hush fell. Expectation had reached fever point. Here and there the scream of a child was heard.

Raising her mask once more, Loisi gave Montford a parting kiss. She also embraced her guardian, and fondled the wincing terrier.

The trial flight had gone well, and Loisi confidently mounted the tower. The two men helped her, for she was handicapped by the heavy apparatus.

Once more Loisi waved; then she switched on the magnets, saw from the ammeter that the current was on, pressed a key, and rose, slowly this time, into the air.

Outside, someone raised a cheer, and the photographers had to work quickly, for in a very short time Loisi was out of range.

She flew quite low over Berlin. She saw the people

waving, heard their shouts. What a magnificent spectacle! Serried masses in every street, in every square. Like a sea the hundreds of thousands of waving hands and arms. Fantastic, that vast plain of upturned faces.

And not only were the streets, balconies, and windows densely filled. On the roofs too stood groups of people waiting to see the daring girl at close quarters.

Coming from the east, she flew over the Belle-Alliance-platz and the Friedrichstrasse, and turned up Unter den Linden to the Lustgarten.

Twice she circled over the great square above the heads of the crowd, then slowly dropped on to the dais where Montford had mounted the apparatus.

The President of the Reich stepped up to Loisi, who had removed her helmet. He shook her hand, then bent and kissed her forehead.

The people broke into wild cheering. Loisi turned to all sides. Everyone was surprised at the pale young face and the laughing eyes with which she looked at the crowd.

The President of the Reich made a short speech to the conqueror of the air, expressed the thanks of the Fatherland, and pinned the Order for Art and Science on her breast. The ministers greeted Loisi, and there was a continuous shaking of hands. The Rektor of the Technische Hochschule conferred upon her the honorary degree of Doctor of Engineering.

Following a speech by the foreign minister, thanking Loisi on behalf of the Fatherland of United Germany, the Netherland Prayer of Thanksgiving was sung by the massed male choirs of Berlin. The crowd joined in, and the hymn swelled to heaven from thousands of throats, while Loisi slowly soared above the heads of the singers. Hats and handkerchiefs were waved, the people were swept away on a wave of enthusiasm.

While Montford sped towards Vienna in the express, Loisi was flying over all the quarters of Berlin, giving all the inhabitants an opportunity to see her. Everywhere, east, north, west, and south, were the same exalted crowds.

High in the air above the flying girl, countless aeroplanes manœuvred.

From Berlin Loisi flew via Hamburg, Hanover, Düsseldorf, Cologne, Frankfurt, Karlsruhe, Stuttgart, Munich, Innsbruck, Salzburg and Linz, to Vienna.

CHAPTER SIXTY-FOUR

BANDS had kept the patient Viennese entertained during the period of waiting. In many places loud-speakers reported the events of the day.

Loisi reached Vienna along the Danube Valley, between Leopoldsberg and Bisamberg. Flying over Briggittenau and the Ninth District, she reached the inner town and landed punctually at the hour arranged on the large platform which had been specially erected in the outer Burghof.

All the church bells of Vienna heralded in brazen tones the entry of the most brilliant genius of all time, Austria's greatest daughter, the girl who had forced the whole world to respect her hard-pressed fatherland.

The jubilation of the Viennese even surpassed that of the Berliners. Their impulsive temperament swept them away. Wherever Loisi appeared, roars of cheers acclaimed her. Men, women and children were all shouting one another down, each thinking he must get the last ounce out of his lungs, make his individual contribution to the general ovation heard.

After the welcome by the President of the Bund, the ministers, and the fathers of the city, Loisi was presented by the Burgomaster with the freedom of the town of Vienna, while the Dean of the University informed the inventress that the title of honorary doctor was to be conferred upon her.

All gazed in astonishment at this worn, pale girl in her bulky flying suit. Her simple nature delighted them.

They had imagined her quite different, or, to be more correct, had not imagined her at all.

The ministers, with Loisi and the President and Burgomaster at their head, went down to the outer Burghof. The throng of schoolchildren stretched almost as far as the eye could see.

The Burgomaster made a rousing speech to the crowd.

"He who has lived through this day with us has experienced a piece of good fortune which millions upon millions will envy him.

"Aloisia Hacker, a daughter of Austria, has made a gift to the world, to humanity; a gift which turns the whole established order upside down, revolutionizes all the conditions of life, and opens up new fields to mankind.

"We have to-day for the second time seen this flying girl, and our admiration and amazement are so great that it is difficult to express them in words.

"If to-day we have seen a single individual flying, in a year thousands will enjoy the freedom of the air, and in two or three years the air will be swarming with them. Everyone will be in a position to possess a Hacker apparatus; every individual will be able to propel himself at lightning speed through the ether from one part of the earth to another.

"While to-day our fast aeroplanes fly across the ocean in a few days, the apparatus of Aloisia Hacker requires only as many hours.

"Only this morning, before starting on her flight round Berlin and to Vienna, the inventress made a trial flight into the ether and reached an altitude of 3,000 kilometers. With the aid of liquid oxygen, she took observations and measurements in the completely airless spaces of the universe, where only natural electric currents move, and then returned unhindered to her starting place.

"This flight in hitherto unexplored regions in the course of which more than 6,000 kilometers was covered, occupied only one hour and forty-eight minutes.

"Aloisia Hacker maintains that in the not too distant future she will be able to carry out a flight which has long been the dream of scientists, though it has never yet been realized, the flight to Mars and the Moon; nay, she hopes with her apparatus to rival the swiftness of lightning.

"But Aloisia Hacker has not only produced for us the flying woman. She has investigated the essential nature of electricity, and as a result is in a position to annul all unfavourable meteorological influences, control the weather, determine the climate, and so revolutionize all the conditions of life on our planet, and insure us against great elemental catastrophies.

"Twice she has produced proof of this capacity."

The speech concluded with some inspired words about the fellow-countrywoman to whom was due the fact that a united German people now existed.

Aloisia Hacker passed through the rows of school-children, who tried to seize and kiss her hand. The little ones fingered the rough flying-suit, and were happy when the fairy's magic hand touched their hair.

Loisi strode along as though in a dream. She could still feel in her limbs a sense of floating in the air. She had reached the zenith of her ambitions, was being honoured as no mortal had ever been honoured before. She intended to pursue these paths further. But first she must be united with Sydney Montford. Then she would not rest until she had made life happy for mankind and freed the earth from all its troubles.

. . . . .

The gala performance in the Burgtheater was the

greatest social event which this world-famous home of art had ever seen.

Loisi Hacker found, to her discomfiture, that she had nothing to wear, as guest of the Reichspräsident, but her flying costume. The proprietor of the great fashion establishment of Maison Zwieback in the Kartnerstrasse was appealed to, and made it possible for Loisi to appear again dressed as a woman, after a lapse of almost three years. She felt distinctly uncomfortable in her new clothes.

The theatre audience paid little attention to the performers. Their eyes were generally turned on the box in which Loisi was sitting near the heads of the state and town.

The artists gave the guest of honour a great ovation from the stage.

CHAPTER SIXTY-FIVE

THE most important event for Loisi was her homecoming to Graz, where after her landing in front of the Rathaus she was carried through the town by the students.

A rain of flowers descended upon her as she passed through the streets of the old town.

People fell on their knees and gave thanks to heaven that God in his goodness should have chosen a child of Graz to be the greatest human being and greatest inventor of all time.

In the cathedral the bishop celebrated Mass, and there three weeks later Aloisia Hacker was married to Sydney Montford.

A second wedding took place at the same hour in the Leechkirche in the Third District.

Herr Karl Pfleiderer was united in matrimony to Fräulein Marta Mittermaier, the stenographer.

The Montfords' honeymoon was to begin two days later. The pair intended to fly together over the ocean to the bridegroom's home.

"I'd like to come too, if I had a suit, and could manage the apparatus!" cried young Frau Pfleiderer. "I can manage the keys of a typewriter, but not those."

"So you'd like to fly about the world now?"

The enthusiasm of the cold-blooded Americans almost

exceeded that of the people of Berlin and Vienna when Loisi and Montford flew up the Hudson.

The syrens of steamers, tugs, ferryboats, and factories emitted an ear-splitting din.

The roofs of the skyscrapers and other buildings were densely covered with people, and there were several accidents.

Karl Pfleiderer cabled to America to announce the arrival of the honeymoon couple, and all the eastern states prepared to give them a reception.

The flight from Graz to New York was accomplished in seven hours.

The pair shot up to a height of 2,000 meters and passed over the continent in less than two hours.

At eight in the morning—2 a.m. by New York time—they started from Graz, and at nine o'clock they were in New York.

The air was filled with aeroplanes, and the pilots had to exercise care to avoid collisions.

The government had ordered two large airships to New York, and it was an unforgettable sight for the crews of these giants when the two tiny figures circled round the airships.

In the afternoon there was a reception at White House.

The President of the United States greeted the daring couple and expressed the hope that the great invention might be beneficial to the whole human race.

In the evening, the Montfords were the guests of the Austrian colony in New York.

"Those who thought our country had lost all prestige were making a serious mistake," said Loisi. It was the first time that she had replied publicly to a speech of welcome.

"Our nation has been jeered at and scorned by many people. The world had forgotten what a galaxy of immortals she has produced; what valuable gifts of culture she has presented to humanity. Anyone who thinks that our fair land is doomed, I will remind of the words of the Emperor Frederich III:

"'*Austria shall endure unto the world's end.*'"

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Biography & Memoirs

The Life of Lord Oxford and Asquith

CYRIL ASQUITH AND J. A. SPENDER

IT is with great pleasure that we announce this authoritative and official life of the late Lord Oxford, which will make one of the most important publications of recent years.

Mr. Cyril Asquith tells the story of the early part of his father's life from its beginnings in Yorkshire, his education in London and Oxford, his early days at the Bar, his first marriage and life at Hampstead, his first successes in Parliament, and so forth. Included in this period is the story of his second marriage, and a selection from letters which he wrote to Miss Margot Tennant (now Lady Oxford) during their engagement throws light on a side of his character little known to the general public.

Mr. J. A. Spender takes up the story from the formation of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's Government in December 1905 and, with many intimate details, carries it to Lord Oxford's retirement from the leadership of the Liberal Party in 1926. Thus covers the period—nearly nine years—of Asquith's Prime Ministership, which in domestic and foreign affairs may easily rank as the nine most critical and dangerous years in British History. In domestic affairs it includes the Budget controversy of 1909-10, and the conflict between Lords and Commons which culminated in the Parliament Act of 1911 ; the Irish controversy and the threat of the Ulster rebellion, and supplies the documents and correspondence necessary to explain the action both of the Government and the Crown in these affairs. In foreign politics it covers the successive foreign crises which ran simultaneously with the domestic crises, and, finally, the Great War up to December 1916. An effort is made to show clearly the action of the Cabinet and various members of it in the last days before the War, and to trace the principal military operations, including the Dardanelles Expedition, from the point of view of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. The story of the downfall of the first Coalition in December, 1916, is told in detail with many new facts.

This book which, of necessity, runs to considerable length, will be fully illustrated and will be published simultaneously in two volumes at approximately three guineas the set.

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CHARLES B. COCHRAN

FOR nearly forty years Mr. C. B. Cochran has been in "the show business". He can look back to the days when, a hard-up exile in New York, he started to earn a precarious living as small-actor, to the present time, when his name is internationally famous as the presenter of some of the most artistic and arresting productions that the theatre has ever known.

In this volume he talks with equal frankness about his successes and his failures, relishing a story against himself as hugely as one to his credit. And what a glittering procession of personalities passes in review! Royalties and peers, cabinet ministers and commoners, peers and painters, singers, dancers and actors, producers and impresarios, box-office managers and stage-hands, prize-fighters and cowboys, jugglers, acrobats, lion-tamers, favourites of the old music hall, stars of theatre-land in Paris or Madrid, Berlin or Vienna, the whole motley crowd of entertainers with their tantrums and their temperaments, their genius and their generosity, flash into Mr. Cochran's mirror.

"Into the night go one and all." A book like Mr. Cochran's preserves them from oblivion and shows them as they lived for our pleasure and delight. And behind them we see the smiling figure of the great showman as he marshals the procession and cries, "Walk up!"

Illustrated, 12s. 6d. net.

My Hollywood Diary

EDGAR WALLACE

THE death of Edgar Wallace deprived the country not only of one of its ablest and most versatile providers of entertainments, but of a peculiarly irreplaceable personality. This book, in the form of an intimate diary written daily to his wife while on his recent tragic visit to Hollywood, is a revelation of the mind of Edgar Wallace.

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Author of "An Adventurous Journey", etc.

KNOWN in many countries of the world as an author, traveller and artist, Mrs. Alec-Tweedie has lived a life full of interest and originality. Her adventures may be said to have begun when, as a girl, she journeyed to Iceland, and visitors were practically unknown in that country. Since the war she has travelled over 100,000 miles, been twice round the world, with side tracks from the Himalayas to Central Africa, and from Siberia and Manchuria to Java and Ceylon.

This book, *Me and Mine*, tells something of the comedies and tragedies of her romantic life. She seems to have met nearly everyone of note, and has something to say about many of them. She has travelled far, has seen many interesting things and encountered many strange adventures; and she gives us here the benefit of her experiences.

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This book, written with reserve and modesty, makes extraordinarily interesting and thrilling reading. In the recital of his experiences the writer pays a remarkable tribute to British organization and power. It is the amazing story of how a man, playing a lone hand, and as fairly as possible under the circumstances, carried on his self-imposed mission from motives of patriotism. 12s. 6d.

Sir Alfred Fripp

CECIL ROBERTS

Author of "Half Way", "Spears Against Us" (*7th impression*), *etc.*

A BIOGRAPHY of unusual attraction is the life of Sir Alfred Fripp which Cecil Roberts has written at the request of Lady Fripp, who has placed all the papers and documents concerning the famous surgeon's life at his disposal.

Sir Alfred Fripp, from his youth onwards, commanded a great circle of friends in all walks of life.

One of the leading surgeons of his day, professionally or socially he knew every famous figure of his times, and Edwardian Society centred around Marlborough House is intimately reflected in the numerous and careful diaries that he kept. In the Great War he was Consulting Surgeon to the Navy and in his closing days he astonished the country by the energy he displayed in organizing the Frothblower movement, for which he raised over £100,000 on behalf of charities.

Mr. Cecil Roberts, has approached the man as a study of a personality that was a mixture of diffidence and courage, of introspection and high ambition and who was, in all senses of the words, "the beloved physician". *Illustrated*, 12*s.* 6*d.*

Hells Angels from the Deep

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM GUY CARR

Author of "By Guess and By God" (13*th impression*).

LIEUTENANT CARR'S magnificent epic of the Submarine Service during the War, *By Guess and By God*, caught the imagination of the public to such an extent that the book is now in its thirteenth large impression. It was in deed, in matter, and in style a book thoroughly deserving of the enthusiastic praise it received.

Hells Angels from the Deep is Lieutenant Carr's own exciting story from the day in 1911 when he ran away to sea, until the Armistice in 1918. Into those seven years Lieutenant Carr crammed an amazing variety of adventures. Serving in every kind of vessel, enduring every sort of condition at sea, meeting hundreds of interesting people, Lieutenant Carr, both before and during the war, in which he joined the submarine service, lived a life which should enthral every lover of adventure.

Illustrated, 10*s.* 6*d.*

History

The Home Front

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THIS notable and important book is a graphic presentment of life at home during the Great War; its labours, humours, and sorrows, privations, and bereavements. The author, who threw herself unreservedly into the work of relief and assuagement, writes from a store of unrivalled experience of the calling up of the men, the panic closing of the factories, the food prices rising to famine height, of food queues and profiteering, the munition girls and their hard toil, and of all the weariness of those dreadful years followed by the inevitable and difficult reactions of peace. There are also piquant and poignant reminiscences of many of the leading people of the time.

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The Cyprian

GRACE E. THOMPSON

Author of "The Patriot King" (2nd imp.), etc.

IN HER last book *The Patriot King* Miss Thompson gave us a delightful picture of that early 19th century monarch William IV. It was acclaimed by the critics as a brilliant, witty and illuminating biography, a second impression being called for soon after publication.

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Naval & Military

Warrior

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Author of "The 'W' Plan" (25th thous.), "Footslogger" (3rd impression).

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De Bernis, Tom Leach, Priscilla and the others rival any characters that Rafael Sabatini has yet created, and little doubt can be entertained as to the reception which will be afforded *The Black Swan.* 7s. 6d.

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Hard knocks had made Captain Joseph Crump a hard, toughened brute; the luck seemed always to be against him: he was always wondering when the Big Chance was coming along to make life worth while. Then one day, suddenly, Fate smiled upon him. He was flung on a Pacific Island. He might have married the fair-skinned daughter of a native chief; he might have ruled a tribe of a thousand natives; he might have accumulated a vast fortune, but somehow . . .

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Author of "Bid Her Awake", "The Almond Tree" (*3rd impression*).

VIRGINIA and Charles, two young cousins staying with an uncle and aunt in the South Seas, see what is explained to them as a mirage, and hear of a legendary island hidden in the heart of a misty sea. An older man, whose acquaintance they have made in the hotel, comes across the same legend: in a spirit of adventure, the three of them set out to look for the island.

They find it. But instead of the dangers that might have confronted them, they find an Englishwoman who had believed, as they did, in the existence of the island, and when a tragedy in her own life drove her from her home, she put her theory to the test. The story is of the way Miss Howard's unexpected visitors influence the situation into which their adventure has tumbled them. 7*s.* 6*d.*

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"A really worthwhile novel", was W. B. Maxwell's opinion; "finely conceived, firmly executed. Its author shows noble thought and high purpose."

It was, indeed, a novel of exceptional quality, and achieved immense popularity. This, her latest work, will be eagerly read by her countless admirers. 7*s.* 6*d.*

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A NEW and exciting story by the author of *The Greater Freedom, Kali's Jewels, The Justice of the White Sahib*, etc. 7*s.* 6*d.*

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THIS is the study of the effect of vast unexpected wealth on the nature of a simple and unsophisticated girl of American birth. It made her cruel to the men who loved her, and it made the men she loved cruel to her. Engulfed in the vast machinery of her millions and satiated with the gratification of every wish, Georgia became the centre of a group of unscrupulous friends who live on her and whom she tolerates only because of the amusement and interest they give to her. But through all the complications of her life she covets one thing—the love of Patrick Otway, and the tardy fulfilment of her desire creates a poignant and unexpected situation. *7s. 6d.*

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Author of "The Pilgrim Soul", etc.

THE last twenty years have seen big changes in life. This is the story of the house in which lived a country squire in 1910, and the influence it had upon his family. The story goes on to 1920, when, handicapped by taxation and by the fall of Squiredom, the family had come to the villa, and it tells of the influence the villa had upon their characters. Again, in 1930, they lived in a service flat and in that flat they were different people. Shirley Keyes made a mistake in her youth, but her love story came right in the end, when, as Elizabeth Browning expressed it, "between me and that time the cypresses grow dark". *7s. 6d.*

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MARGARET PETERSON

Author of "Scarlet Blossoms", "Moonflowers", etc.

THIS is the story of a man's love for a woman, and how in his service he remained faithful through shame, horror, and death. It is the story of how Richard, simple and loyal-hearted, loved and married Melody; how she betrayed and deserted him and how he came to her again in the end.

Other people's loves and tragedies are woven into the novel; and against the background of the criminal courts is told the story of Richard's own tragedy and the way it worked out. *7s. 6d.*

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ONE of the most popular and entertaining writers of the day, Mr. Cosmo Hamilton in *The Gilded Halo* has achieved a memorable story, and a penetrating study of a phase of modern life.

We are introduced to a little world which centres around the home of the Berkshires, Old Weir House. This little world, as the larger one about it, is composed of men and women, each with their joys and their sorrows, their loves and their despairs, their wisdom and their stupidity, and each dependent upon the courage and saintlike spirit of Lady Berkshire to overcome the crisis which they felt to be hovering over them, threatening the very foundations of their lives. But slowly, under intolerable burdens, the tranquillity of her nature breaks down, and with her collapse the whole fabric of the little world decays, to come swaying down in final ruin. 7*s.* 6*d.*

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EDEN PHILLPOTTS

Author of "Stormbury", "A Clue from the Stars", etc.

BRED IN THE BONE is a story of Devon. It moves and evolves slowly, with the grandeur and the force and the dignity of the earth from which it springs.

Complete in itself, this novel is, we are told, the first of a trilogy chronicling the life of Avis, and if Mr. Phillpotts, in his subsequent books, can maintain the quality of this one, it will, without any doubt at all, rank as the masterpiece of a singularly great writer. 7*s.* 6*d.*

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THAT Mr. Frankau combines in unusual degree the art of the novelist and the art of the short-story writer is evident from the successes which his publications in either field achieve; and this new collection of tales will be eagerly awaited. 7*s.* 6*d.*

Mungo

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